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OF NEW YORK

1918

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MODERN

ACTING DRAMA.

VOL. II.

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Miller's

MODERN ACTING DRAMA,

CONSISTING OF

THE MOST POPULAR PIECES

PRODUCED AT THE

LONDON THEATRES,

SUBJECT TO THE

PROVISIONS OF THE DRAMATIC COPYRIGHT ACT.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

NICHOLAS FLAM,
UNCLE JOHN,
CHIMNEY PIECE,
HIGH, LOW, JACK, AND GAME,
THE BEULAH SPA,
MY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE,
A SOLDIER'S COURTSHIP,
P. P.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
(Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

1833.

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FROM
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1918

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NICHOLAS FLAM,

ATTORNEY AT LAW.

A FARCE,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

J. B. BUCKSTONE.

PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

LONDON:
JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
(*Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.*)

1833.

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LONDON:
BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON, JOHNSON'S-COURT,
FLEET-STREET.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Nicholas Flam, Attorney at Law	Mr. W. Farren.
Shrimp, his Clerk.....	Mr. Buckstone.
Lord Pedigree	Mr. Bass.
Mr. Fitzsmith	Mr. Brindal.
Doctor Birch	Mr. Strickland.

WOMEN.

Harriet	Miss J. Scott.
Mrs. Nibble	Mrs. Tayleure.
Miss Mary Puddicombe	Mrs. W. Clifford.

This farce was represented for the first time August 1, 1833.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME.

FLAM.—Snuff-coloured coat—black waistcoat—black trousers and gaiters—white neckerchief—iron grey wig, full at the back and flat on the forehead.

SHRIMP.—Very small blue coat with bright buttons—striped waistcoat—white neckerchief—short nankeen trousers—white stockings—laced boots—brown crop wig.

LORD PEDIGREE.—Suit of black.

MR. FITZSMITH.—Frock coat, &c.

DOCTOR BIRCH.—Suit of black—neckerchief tied loosely—hair powdered and falling in large curls upon the shoulders—black cotton stockings hanging loosely about the legs—shoes and buckles.

HARRIET.—Silk pelisse and hat.

MRS. NIBBLE.—White bonnet—pink shawl and cotton dress.

MISS PUDDICOMBE.—Black velvet spencer—very little French bonnet—the hair in bands—coloured skirt—reticule, and an ornament on the forehead.

The subject of this farce was suggested by PICARD'S *L'Enfant Trouvé*. It is not a literal translation, as may be seen by comparing the two pieces. Its success was chiefly owing to the excellent acting of Mr. W. Farren, and the rest of the performers, to whom the author returns his sincere thanks.

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NICHOLAS FLAM.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The Interior of an Attorney's Office—a high Desk and Stool, beneath which is a round office table, covered with papers—Doors and second Entrances, and a door in the flat—Chairs, &c. &c.

SHRIMP *discovered, seated on the high stool, at the desk writing.*

SHRIMP. That's done—how my fingers do ache—now I'll rest myself a little—Master's out and I've finished the deed. (*descends.*) My aunt says I've a genteel situation here—what a pity one can't have a genteel situation without having to fag so. I'm here from nine in the morning till nine at night with only half an hour allowed for dinner—always writing or running about, and I get six shillings a week—a very handsome salary—but I should like to get it without having any thing to do—and that's not the case here—for no sooner one thing's done than there's another to begin at. (*The office bell heard.* SHRIMP *jumps on his stool, pulls cord that hangs over his desk, and re-commences writing.*)

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Enter LORD PEDIGREE.

LORD P. Is Mr. Flam within?

SHRIMP. No, sir. If you'll take a seat he'll be in a quarter of an hour.

LORD P. If I *don't* take a seat, how long will he be?

SHRIMP. Twenty minutes—at least the time will seem so much longer if you stand—and if it *seems* so—why it it's all the same as if it really *was* so.

LORD P. You are a sharp lad—how old are you?

SHRIMP. Fifteen and a half.

LORD P. How long have you been with Mr. Flam?

SHRIMP. Five weeks next Monday.

LORD P. (*Taking up some papers on the table.*) Is this your writing?

SHRIMP. Yes, sir.

LORD P. A very good hand.

SHRIMP. It ought to be, for I'm always at it.

LORD P. What are your parents?

SHRIMP. Haven't got any—I've only a haunt.

LORD P. A sharp lad like you should have been put to a trade.

SHRIMP. A trade—what—Oh, no; they intend to make a gentleman o' me.

LORD P. And so have placed you in a lawyer's office?

SHRIMP. Yes, sir—six shillings a-week.

LORD P. Do you like your situation?

SHRIMP. If I'd nothing to do, I should.

LORD P. Then a sinecure would suit you better?

SHRIMP. What's that, sir?

LORD P. A place that gives no trouble.

SHRIMP. And a good salary?

LORD P. Yes, yes.

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SHRIMP. Bless me—that would just be the very thing. If you should hear of a gentleman with a vacancy, will you think of me, sir?

LORD P. Oh, certainly. (*The office bell heard.*)

SHRIMP. That's master. (*Pulls the string.*)

FLAM *heard without.*

FLAM. The debt and costs must be paid to-morrow, or I shall sign judgment. Good morning. (*He enters, carrying a blue bag.*) Ah, my lud, hope your ludship's well. Take a chair, my lud—will attend to you in a moment. (*Sits on a stool at the desk.*) Shrimp!

SHRIMP. Yes, sir. (*Jumping from his stool.*)

FLAM. Done Spendthrift's mortgage?

SHRIMP. Yes, sir.

FLAM. Get your hat. (SHRIMP *gets down his hat from a a peg on which it was hanging.*) Serve this copy of a writ—defendant lives in Fleet-street—leave this bill of costs at M'Squabble's in Westminster—then run to the Royal Exchange with this letter—step to Whitechapel with this notice of declaration—then go as fast as you can with this draft to the Edgeware-road—and be back in half an hour.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir. (*Aside to* LORD PEDIGREE.) Please, sir, don't forget the sinecure. (*Exit.*)

FLAM. (*At the Desk.*) Perkins at the suit of Jones—put in bail. Smith versus Hopkins—case for counsel. (*Coming from the desk.*) Now, my lud, I'm at your service. I thought you were here, as I saw your carriage leave the door. Bowed to your niece—a charming lady—intends to return for you, no doubt.

LORD P. In a few minutes.

FLAM. Well, my lud, I have submitted an abstract of the title of your estate to a client, who is inclined to purchase.

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LORD P. And the money Mr. Flam—if the sum I require be not forth-coming almost immediately ruin stares me in the face.

FLAM. And a very rude stare it is. That wretch ruin has no common politeness; none—well—well—we'll try to expedite the matter—now my lud you must excuse an observation I am about to make; being entrusted with your affairs, I am aware of course of their melancholy confusion, and which has been greatly encreased by two expensive misfortunes, a volatile son, and a lost election.

LORD P. Sir, I can allow of no—

FLAM. Pardon me, my lud. If I have wounded your feelings. I think I can produce a panacea that will infallibly cure the hurt. You have a niece—she has no other relative—now if we could marry her to a monied man—some young and wealthy citizen—

LORD P. A citizen, sir! think ye I should condescend.

FLAM. Hear me to the end, my lud. I have a client, a gentleman of respectable—respectable, do I say? a gentleman of *high* connections and princely income.

LORD P. Well, sir.

FLAM. But he's a man of business—his time is precious, too precious to be wasted in looking for a wife, he has therefore employed me as his agent, his chief aim being to form an alliance with some *noble* family—money no object.

LORD P. Certainly not—under circumstances.

FLAM. Now my lud—I have looked about me—I have been every where—from the boxes of the opera to the stalls of a fancy fair; but not a woman have I seen that I could conscientiously recommend—you yesterday introduced me to your niece—Flam, says I to myself—there's the wife for your client.

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LORD P. He is rich you say?

FLAM. (*Aside.*) He bites. Was the junior partner in a great mercantile establishment—the seniors of the firm have died off, and he is now in sole possession of the house and connections.

LORD P. His family you tell me, are respectable.

FLAM. Noble, my lud—Sir William—I forget his name, is his cousin—Van Watermark the great banker of Amsterdam is his mother's brother-in-law. I *have* heard say that his grand father was nearly related to a noble duke—and his parents are—are—eminent, eminent, and irreproachable.

LORD P. And his name?

FLAM. Fitzsmith.

LORD P. Well, sir! If upon an introduction to your client, I find the description you have given of his fortune and connexions has not been exaggerated, we may talk further on the subject. *(The office bell rings.)*

FLAM. That's the office bell—no doubt the gentleman himself—will your ludship step into my parlour? 'Tis no doubt my client; if so, he must be prepared for the honour of meeting you, this way my lud, (*opening the right-hand door.*) I sincerely hope we may bring the matter to bear—his unbounded wealth will sustain your nobility—and your nobility will do honour to his unbounded wealth, *(Bows* LORD PEDIGREE *in, and closes the door, jumps on the stool, pulls the office string, and* FITZSMITH *enters.*

FLAM. Ah, my dear sir! you could not have arrived at a happier moment. Hush! *(in an under tone.)* I have seen his ludship, and have commenced proceedings.

FITZS. Indeed, then you are my best friend, but I must first inform you, that mercantile buiness requires my immediate presence on the continent.

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FLAM. And you wish to be married before you depart, in order to take your wife with you.

FITZS. Exactly.

FLAM. It *shall* be so—I've said the word—hush! his ludship is now here—you have told me that he is ignorant of the acquaintance already subsisting between his niece and you; and that she looks with an eye of favour on your little advances.

FITZS. But it is in despair, as his lordship has declared—vowed—that she shall never marry a commoner.

FLAM. Dear—dear—dear! can't you make a patent candlestick and get knighted? or—stay—you must bear me out in a few little hints I have given him, concerning your connections. You must swagger about noble uncles and illustrious aunts. Swear the Emperor of China is your distant relative—that he sends you a packet of Twankay every month, declare that Buonaparte———

FITZS. Nay, nay—I cannot descend to imposture.

FLAM. Imposture—you defame our proceedings. We are merely defeating an absurd prejudice: step into my back office, while I exchange a word with his ludship. Don't flinch, and you shall be married to-morrow. In—in —(*Puts* FITZSMITH *into the room at back.*) Now to bring them together.—(*Runs to the door.*) Will your ludship do me the honour to step out.—(LORD PEDIGREE *re-enters.*) I have consulted with my client, my lud, and he feels so highly flattered by your condescension in allowing him an introduction to you, that he has retired a moment to gain the composure necessary for so appalling an epoch—hem—Did you ever hear of the Earl of Smithfield?

LORD P. Never, sir. Nor do I believe—

FLAM. That such a peerage ever existed. You're right—

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I've mistaken the title—'twas another—can't recollect it now. But the noble house that I mean, married into the family of my client. (*Aside.* I mustn't get out of my depth.) Before proceeding further I trust your ludship will consent to an immediate interview, at which your niece may be present; for surely *her* feelings should be consulted. She may object to my client—then of course the negotiation is at an end. On the other hand, she may, at first sight, become tenderly interested in him—then of course our labours will be greatly eased. Allow me to step to the carriage, and ask her so walk in—

LORD P. Nay—I'll not trouble you—

FLAM. No trouble, my lord.

LORD P. I must exchange a word with her before she can be introduced to your client.

FLAM. Then allow me to conduct your ludship to the door. This way, may lud—this way. (*Exit* FLAM, *bowing out* LORD PEDIGREE. FITZSMITH *comes from the room back.*)

FITZS. Confound the fellow, he will ruin us. She will naturally express some surprise at meeting me under such circumstances, and that may excite her uncle's suspicions.

Re-enter FLAM.

FLAM. Get ready, summon your presence of mind, and look dignified—fancy yourself lord mayor. She is coming into the office to be introduced to you. I had no opportunity of apprising her who you were.—Hush—they are here.

(*Re-enter* LORD PEDIGREE *and* HARRIET.)

FLAM. Allow me, my lud, to present to you my best respected client, Mr. Fitzsmith.

HAR. (*Starting.*) 'Tis he!

LORD P. He!—whom do you mean?

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FLAM. (*Aside to* LORD PEDIGREE.) Hush, my dear lud—don't check the emotion for the world,—'tis love at first sight. I was once attack'd in the same way, and my symptoms were precisely similar. Don't disturb her—don't check the thrill of ecstasy that now so delightfully confuses her. Be seated, I beg. (*He places four chairs—they sit.*) Hem—You no doubt find this silence very embarrassing—allow me to break it for you. We are each of us placed in situations of peculiar delicacy. The young lady is agitated—natural enough. Her noble uncle is anxious—natural enough. My client is timid and confused—natural enough—and I feel for you all—natural enough. (*He rises.*) My lud, I have already explained the wishes of my client; he is willing to lay his princely fortune at your niece's feet; and surely the union of two such noble families—

FITZS. Hush!

FLAM. (*Aside to* FITZSMITH.) Silence—is a duty we owe to ourselves and to society; and if I have any knowledge of the human heart, I trust I am not speaking rashly or hyperbolically, when I assert that it is my opinion that my respected client is by no means indifferent to the tenderest feelings of the fair object of his proudest hopes. (FLAM *resumes his seat.*)

LORD P. 'Tis impossible, at this early stage of our acquaintance, to arrive at any conclusive point; but I trust if you will favour me with your company in Grosvenor-square to-morrow, the meeting may be attended with the happiest results.

FLAM. (*Aside to* FITZSMITH.) Hear! hear!—answer his ludship.

FITZS. I trust, my lord, I shall not forfeit one jot of your favour, if I candidly confess that an acquaintance, I may

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say an attachment, already exists between that lady and myself.

FLAM. What the devil are you about?

LORD P. Sir! an attachment already exists! (*To* HARRIET.) Have you dared to form a clandestine connexion.—Come, madam, to your carriage. (LORD PEDIGREE *hurries off* HARRIET, *to the utter consternation of* FLAM, *who falls in his chair with a groan of agony.*)

FLAM. Oh!—ruined!—ruined! How could you be so weak? How could you be so idiotic? just as I had pleaded your cause so successfully, to jump up and criminate yourself. But 'tis all over now—you—will never see—"your attachment" again—he will take the management of his affairs out of my hands—I shall lose the making of a long bill—and you the woman that you are dying for.

FITZS. How could I see her embarrassment, and not endeavour to remove it?

FLAM. What must he think of me? I have lied through thick and thin for you. My day-book only knows the falsehoods I have uttered to advance your interests.

FITZS. But candour.

FLAM. Candour—Pooh! were we to be candid in our cases in the courts of law, what would become of us?- You can arrive at no eminence, however mean, without some little juggling: the world, the very construction of the world requires, demands it. (*The office-bell heard;* FLAM *pulls the string and* SHRIMP *enters—a note in his hand.*)

SHRIMP. I've served the writ, sir; defendant said you might go to Jerico, and kicked me out of the house. I couldn't go to the other places in the time you told me, so I put the letters in the post; and as I was coming in here, a footman gave me this note to give to you.

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FLAM. (*Looking at the note.*) 'Tis from my lud, and written in pencil (*to* SHRIMP). Go into the back office. (SHRIMP *goes off.*) Perhaps he relents—(*opens the note, and reads.*) "Being informed of every particular respecting my niece's acquaintance with your client, and as certain prejudices I entertain have been respected, the door of introduction is still open, provided his parents and connexions are of the high rank and respectability that you have stated, and to whom it is necessary I should be immediately known, otherwise all further negociation on the subject must cease." A new trial by Jupiter—there is still hope.

FITZS. What have you said of my parents and connexions?

FLAM. Said! Given them splendid characters; I knew our cause was hopeless unless I talked largely of *them*.

FITZS. But you have never seen my connexions?

FLAM. Never—but I have an imagination, my dear friend.

FITZS. You do not know them.

FLAM. That honour is yet reserved for me.

FITZS. I have no relations.

FLAM. What?

FITZS. Not a soul belonging to me.

FLAM. No cousins?

FITZS. None.

FLAM. No uncles?

FITZS. None.

FLAM. No aunts?

FITZS. None.

FLAM. No fathers?

FITZS. None.

FLAM. No mothers?

FITZS. None.

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FLAM. The devil! Then how did you come into the world?

FITZS. I never knew my parents.

FLAM. What? You are not a—death to our hopes—you are not a foundling?

FITZS. I am, indeed.

FLAM. Horror! And I have been talking to my lud of your uncles, and aunts, and brothers-in-law. What *is* to be done? if we go to his ludship to-morrow, and you with your usual candour confess that you have no relations, his ludship, with his usual candour, will order John the footman to kick us down stairs. Stop—yes—I see a way; I'll build a rail-road over this marsh of despair that shall either carry us safely to our journeys end, or swamp us for ever. In the first place, tell me all you know of yourself—who are you? What are you? What are your earliest recollections of yourself?

FITZS. Being a troublesome boy in the country-house of my late friend the merchant—

FLAM. Who afterwards, I conclude, admitted you as a clerk, and then as a partner in the firm?

FITZS. From him I learnt that I was discovered when an infant lying at his door, and he being unmarried—

FLAM. Adopted you, and made you what you are—where was this country-house?

FITZS. In Devonshire.

FLAM. Well, Mr. Fitzsmith, how the deuce came you by the name of Fitzsmith?

FITZS. A whim of my benefactor; he thought the chances were in the favour of my being a child of some Smith or Jones, the former name he considered to be most universal—

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FLAM. And hence your cognomen—now will you entirely confide in my skill; if so, I'll carry you through this business triumphantly. In the first place we must get you a father and mother. No objections—it must be done. How much will you give for a father and mother?

FITZS. What do you mean?—wou'd you have me deceive Harriet—wou'd you have me—

FLAM. Hush—If you are getting into heroics I've done with you; she loves you, and a woman is ever ready to pardon any means a man may use to win her, however extravagant. In the first place I shall require supplies. Now that little property you have so long wished to get rid off. Stokeum cum Pogis, assign that to me, and I will undertake to provide for your parents and satisfy myself—say the word—give me Stokeum cum Pogis, and I will give you a father and mother. Are you content?

FITZS. Well, well—I'll leave all to you.

FLAM. Enough. Now leave me to my thoughts, and call in the evening, I will then report progress. In the mean time I give you this assurance to comfort you,—you shall be married to-morrow. Now, go—fall down on your knees when you get home, and bless me—your second benefactor. Good morning (*bows him out, and calls after him*)—you may as well get the license at once, and the ring, and all the little concomitants. Hem! Now to work, Shrimp.

Enter SHRIMP.

Get me the morning paper.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir. (*Goes off.*)

FLAM. I must search the advertisements; they no doubt will assist me.

Re-enter SHRIMP.

SHRIMP. A client wishes to speak to you, sir.

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FLAM. Of what sex?

SHRIMP. I don't know—She's a woman.

FLAM. A lady?

SHRIMP. Not quite. She's neither a lady nor a woman—between the two, you know.

FLAM. Ask her in.

SHRIMP. Walk in, ma'am. (*Enter* MRS. NIBBLE.) If you want advice, my master's the man.

FLAM. Your servant, madam—take a seat. The newspaper, Shrimp. Quick—quick.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir. (*Exit* SHRIMP.)

FLAM. Now, madam, your pleasure.

MRS. NIB. I have called, sir, to ask your advice on a very delicate point.

FLAM. A breach of promise?

MRS. NIB. Oh dear, no.

FLAM. Recommended to me by any friend?

MRS. NIB. No, sir, I am from the country; seeing your name on the door, it occurred to me that I might ask your advice on a subject that has long been locked in my agitated heart.

FLAM. (*Aside.*) From the country? I'll cross-examine her; she may make a very excellent mother for Mr. Fitzsmith. Well, madam, now for the delicate point?

MRS. NIB. You must know, sir, that I am housekeeper to an elderly gentleman.

FLAM. Um!

MRS. NIB. I trust what I am about to reveal will go no further.

FLAM. Madam, the bosom of a lawyer is the sacred repository of his client's confidence.

MRS. NIB. I was married when quite a child.

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FLAM. Ah, we have all our weak moments.

MRS. NIB. My husband turned out a villain.

FLAM. A very common turn out now a days.

MRS. NIB. He deserted me, sir.

FLAM. Is it possible?

MRS. NIB. Deserted me eight years ago, sir—went abroad, and I have never seen him since. (*Sobbing.*)

FLAM. Don't weep, my dear madam. A real widow would not do that; she'd make another and a better use of her eyes.

MRS. NIB. I was thrown upon the wide world, 'till at length I turned my attention to housekeeping; now, sir, this is the point:—the gentleman with whom I have latterly resided, has paid me very great attention; he has behaved with a kindness and a delicacy, that I must confess has turned my thoughts into a channel, from which I once supposed they were excluded for ever—

FLAM. Has offered you his hand, I suppose?

MRS. NIB. Not exactly offered—but he has given me the hint in a manner so peculiar, that I must relate it. We tiffed a little yesterday, respecting a trifling mistake in my tea account, in the course of which he used rather a sharp word—that affected me to tears; he perceived that my feelings were hurt, and observed that he had not rebuked me half so severely as the fault deserved, and that if I committed it again he would marry me, and then he could scold me as he pleased.

FLAM. Of course you have committed it again.

MRS. NIB. I'm afraid at present—but if I should, and he wishes to put his threat into execution, what am I to do? Is a first husband considered dead in law, when he has not been heard of for eight years?

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FLAM. No, madam.

MRS. N. Bless me!

FLAM. You must obtain evidence of his decease ere you can marry again.

MRS. NIB. Dear! dear! How very awkward!

FLAM. Shall I advertise your husband?

MRS. NIB. No, no, if he should be alive, he may appear, and in that case there would be no hope;—but I'll go home, consider what course to take, and call again to-morrow.

FLAM. Allow me to put down your name and address.

MRS. NIB. That is of no consequence. I merely wish for legal advice. Your fee I believe is—

FLAM. Six and eight pence, madam.

MRS. NIB. So I thought, and have wrapped it up ready. (*Giving him money wrapped in paper.*) Very hard to be obliged to pay for such unpleasant information.

FLAM. Very indeed, ma'am; but all my clients say the same—when verdicts are against them. Good morning madam; obtain proof of your first husband's decease, and I shall be most happy to draw up the settlement for your second.

MRS. NIB. (*Curtseying.*) You are very kind, sir—good morning, sir.

FLAM. Mind how you go out—take care of the office door, it shuts of itself—sometimes closes so sharply, it slaps my clients into the street—good morning madam. (*He bows her out.*)

FLAM. Pity she was not a widow; I think she would have made a very excellent mother—there was a fine matronly air in her looks.

Enter SHRIMP *with a newspaper.*

SHRIMP. The paper, sir.

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FLAM. Sit at the desk, and write as I dictate.

SHRIMP. (*Sitting at the desk.*) Yes sir.

FLAM. (*Looking over the paper and reading.*) "Wants to "borrow—wants to lend—case of distress—wants to take "care of a single gentleman's house—a neat widow —" What's this? "As private tutor, an elderly gentleman, lately master of an academy in Devonshire—no incumbrance—wishes to travel—" The very thing—here's a father at once. Write, sir, write—

SHRIMP. I'm ready, sir.

FLAM. (*Dictating.*) Sir—If you will apply—

SHRIMP. Apply—(*writing.*)

FLAM. At my office immediately—

SHRIMP. Two m's in immediately, an't there?

FLAM. Certainly.

SHRIMP. Immediately—

FLAM. You will hear of something to your advantage—

SHRIMP. Advantage—

FLAM. Sign my name—put the address—and direct—Homo, Peel's Coffee-House—H–O–M–O. If he's a good fatherly figure and wants to be settled, he's the man. Now for a mother. (*Reading.*) "An aged lady—" Won't do. "A young woman peculiarly situated—" No; I want a middle-aged lady peculiarly situated. (*Reading.*) "The French language—" Ah! here's one.—"A middle-aged maiden lady, who has resided from childhood in the north of France—" Excellent.—"wishing to settle in England—" We'll settle her.—"is anxious to reside in a family to teach—" The very thing; Shrimp, write a duplicate of that letter.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir.

FLAM. What man can wish for parents more respectable?

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The mother accomplished, the father a scholar. I must get them here—see what they are—drill some parental feelings into them, and then introduce them to my lord. Direct that letter to M.P., 15, Burlington Arcade.

SHRIMP. How do you spell Burlington?

FLAM. You're a pretty clerk, sir; why don't you attend to your orthography?

SHRIMP. I'll attend to any thing, if you'll double my wages; give me twelve shillings a week and see how I'll spell. Burlington—oh, I know—its done, sir.

FLAM. Get you hat.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir. (*He jumps from the stool and gets his hat.*)

FLAM. Attend to me, and I think I can make you a sharp lad.

SHRIMP. I think you can, sir; I know you're a good one to grind a body.

FLAM. Silence, sirrah! Deliver those letters—endeavour to see the parties to whom they are addressed—learn who, and what they are—be quick—and cunning—and I'll—

SHRIMP. What, sir?

FLAM. Raise your wages.

SHRIMP. You will, sir? (SHRIMP *looks amazed and delighted at* FLAM, *and rushes out of the office.*)

FLAM. (*Calling after him.*) Stay, sir. Hang the notice that I am not at home, on the office-door, but will return in half an hour. Now for a cat-like meditation (*Falling in his chair, closing his eyes, and putting his handkerchief over his head.*) and a nap; then I shall awake like a giant refreshed—present my client with an excellent father and

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mother, and a charming wife—his poor ludship with a rich son-in-law, and myself with the manor of Stokeum cum Pogis; then who will dare to say that a lawyer is not an useful member of society?

(*Falls back in his chair in an attitude of deep thought, and the drop descends.*)

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.—SCENE I.

(Scenery as before.)

FLAM *discovered waking from his nap, he looks at his watch.*

FLAM. Not yet returned, the fellow has been away two hours; I have taken a long nap, and have wasted time enough for the disposal of half a dozen Chancery suits. (*The office bell heard, he jumps up, pulls the door-string.*) Here he is—now sir, you have been a long while, sir.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir, but it cou'd not be avoided.

FLAM. Have you seen the parties?

SHRIMP. Yes, sir; and they will both be here presently.

FLAM. And what have you learnt respecting them?

SHRIMP. All manner of things; I had a talk with the lady.

FLAM. Well! is she matronly in her appearance? dignified—does she seem to carry her head high?

SHRIMP. As high as she can, about five feet eight, I should think, she sadly wanted to know the meaning of your letter.

FLAM. Of course you knew nothing.

SHRIMP. Oh, nothing! I said I thought it was concerning money matters. And when she found she could get nothing out of me, she said she was almost afraid to come.

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As she was quite alone here in London, with nobody to protect her, which was very distressing; as she was quite artful and *fisticated.*

FLAM. And you told her—

SHRIMP. That she needn't be at all frightened. As you was a most gentlemanly man, and no ways given to being *sarcy.*

FLAM. Poor creature! she must have a husband, she shall have one—'twill be an act of philanthropy to marry her; well, and what of Homo?

SHRIMP. Oh, a very nice old gentleman indeed, wears black and powder, and seems very odd.

FLAM. Eccentric, eh? so much the better.

SHRIMP. While I was watching for him, I heard the waiter's calling him all manner of names.

FLAM. Ah!

SHRIMP. They said he was an old miserly fellow. That he came there every day about letters, giving all sorts of trouble, without any body ever seeing the shape of his money.

FLAM. Avaricious too; nothing *can* be better—a small annuity for life, will secure him at once. Stokeum cum Pogis will afford him 300*l.* a-year, and yet leave a handsome overplus for myself; an excellent pair! fortune seems to have thrown them in my way on purpose. (*The bell heard.*)

SHRIMP. There's the bell; I shouldn't wonder if it an't one of them.

FLAM. Run to the door, and shew them in. (*Exit* SHRIMP.)

FLAM. Now to put on a look of gentlemanly mystery mingled with an aspect of excessive urbanity.

Re-enter SHRIMP.

SHRIM. 'Tis the lady, sir! she seems in an awful twitter.

FLAM. Ask her in—stay in the passage to answer the bell

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immediately; and don't let a soul enter, while we are in conference.

SHRIMP. I'll take care—walk in ma'am—please ma'am.

(*Enter* MISS PUDDICOMBE.)

That's master, ma'am! don't be frightened, I shall be outside the door. (*Exit* SHRIMP.)

FLAM. (*Observing her.*) I like her—there's a calm dignity in her face.

MISS P. (*Curtseying.*) I have called in consequence of a letter, I am M. P.

FLAM. Indeed, be seated I beg; (*placing her a chair, and looking at her very intensely, she catches his eye, and seems confused.*)

FLAM. Um—good eyes—aristocratic hands.

MISS P. Bless me how he is scutinizing; I begin to feel excessively nervous.

FLAM. (*Drawing a chair close to her.*) Madam.

MISS P. (*Retreating.*) Sir.

FLAM. Don't be alarmed, my dear madam.

MISS P. Excuse my suspicions; but I trust—I hope—that I am not selected to be the victim of evil machinations.

FLAM. Madam—you wrong my purpose: there is a moral dignity in your whole deportment that would awe the most reckless libertine into respect and propriety.

MISS P. London is so strange to me—that I tremble at every sound.

FLAM. No doubt—no doubt; you have cause to be apprehensive; you are still young; I should say six-and-forty.

MISS P. Not quite, sir.

FLAM. Ah! a period of life, when one cannot be too cautious, you are a teacher of the French tongue, I learn.

MISS P. 'Tis my only resource, the daughters of a family

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with whom I have resided at St. Omer, some years in that capacity having married, I am compelled to seek another asylum.

FLAM. Um! will you allow me to ask you one question?

MISS P. Certainly.

FLAM. You will not be offended at its singularity?

MISS P. I hope not.

FLAM. *(Fixing his eye on her.)* You are, I believe unmarried.

MISS P. (*Spreading her fan.*) I am, sir, (*she conceals her face.*)

FLAM. You were never married?

MISS P. I have been proposed to many times; but—but—

FLAM. You are difficult to please!

MISS P. Exactly.

FLAM. Should you like to have a husband?

MISS P. Oh, sir—what an odd question!

FLAM. And yet 'tis one that's put every hour in the day.

MISS P. My reply, so entirely rests upon circumstances.

FLAM. Suppose a gentleman offered himself—who might realize all your ideas of male perfection, should you refuse?

MISS P. (*Aside.*) What does he mean? he must have met me previously, and I have struck his attention.

FLAM. I pause for a reply.

MISS P. (*Glancing at him, aside.*) I declare he's far from ordinary.

FLAM. May I construe this silence into a sweet assent?

MISS P. I must confess, that the delicacy of your manner, and the intellectual superiority of your address, cannot be disagreeable to any one.

FLAM. My address, (*aside,*) and manners! he! he! she'll do—thinks I am proposing for myself, and would marry

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me immediately. My dear madam—I—I— *(Taking her hand tenderly. The office bell rings very loudly, she is startled.)*

MISS P. Bless me.

FLAM. 'Tis my bell, madam.

MISS P. How it startled me.

FLAM. No doubt—you ladies *will* jump at a *ring*.

Enter SHRIMP, *crosses behind to* FLAM.

SHRIMP. It's Homo—is he to come in?

FLAM. Certainly—and keep your place at the door, that we may not be disturbed; I am at home to no one but Mr. Fitzsmith.

SHRIMP. Yes, sir, (*Exit* SHRIMP.)

MISS P. You are called to your professional duties. Don't let me interrupt you.

FLAM. Don't stir, my dear madam, keep your seat, 'tis merely a gentleman that I hope to see you better acquainted with.

MISS P. Some friend that I am to be introduced to, no doubt, how singular. (*Enter* DOCTOR BIRCH.)

DR. B. I have called at your request.

FLAM. Homo, I presume?

DR. B. The same, sir.

FLAM. Will you step into my parlour for one moment, my dear madam, (*opening door.*) I shall not detain you a second.

MISS P. Really sir, I am so confused—

FLAM. Nay, dear madam.

MISS P. And alarmed, but I trust entirely to your honour, sir.

FLAM. And you shall not be deceived, believe me, (FLAM *bows her in, shuts the door, and approaches* DR. BIRCH.)

FLAM. Do me the favour, sir, to step to that end of my office.

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DR. B. That end, sir, (*pointing.*)

FLAM. Yes, sir. (DOCTOR BIRCH *crosses to the right-hand,*) A very gentlemanly walk, indeed! he'll make a highly imposing father, sir!

DR. B. Sir.

FLAM. In your advertisement you state that you are without incumbrance.

DR. B. I am sir.

FLAM. That is, you have no wife.

DR. B. My only meaning of the word incumbrance—

FLAM. I am a man of business, sir.

DR. B. So am I, sir.

FLAM. My purpose in sending for you to my office, is to encumber you.

DR. B. I don't comprehend.

FLAM. To give you a wife.

DR. B. I'm much obliged to you, sir; but if ever I do take one, I should prefer making the choice myself.

FLAM. I have chosen one for you.

DR. B. You have?

FLAM. A maiden lady with 300*l.* a-year.

DR. B. Oh! Ah!

FLAM. Now you're struck—you feel a tender interest in the object already.

DR. B. But tell me sir—

FLAM. Nothing more at present—merely admit that your curiosity is excited.

DR. B. Certainly an advantageous match would demand my earnest attention.

FLAM. That's enough. (FLAM. *crosses to the door, and opens it, and leads out* MISS PUDDICOMBE.)

FLAM. Take a seat, madam. (*Placing a chair,* MISS

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PUDDICOMBE *sits.*) Homo, don't stand, I beg. (*Placing another for* BIRCH, *looking at them.*) They were made for each other. (*Drawing a chair between them.*) Now to strike the blow at once; the subject to which I wish to rivet your attention, interests both of you.

MISS P. Indeed!

DR. B. I have not the honour of knowing that lady.

FLAM. So you think: listen; I am about to unfold a tale that must not be interrupted; for both of you are deeply implicated in its mysteries.

DR. B. Bless me!

MISS P. I'm quite agitated!

FLAM. Hush! about thirty years ago, a young English scholar, in making a tour of the Continent, was attracted by the beauties of a certain spot, to make it his residence—hem—a singularly beautiful girl, also of this country, was then an inhabitant of that place. At one of those little merry-makings peculiar to the province, this luckless pair formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into an attachment; the young scholar was elegant, graceful, formed for tenderness, and overflowing with poetry and passion. He declared his love; the singularly beautiful girl, flung herself into his arms, and with sighs and blushes, confessed the impression he had made upon her heart, and—they were married.

MISS P. What a relief! I began to tremble.

DR. B. But I can't conceive what this has to do—

FLAM. Silence in the court! The morning after their marriage, the horrors of a civil war suddenly burst forth in that once peaceful paradise; dwellings were burnt, whole families became disunited, husbands and wives were torn asunder, amongst whom was this newly married pair. He

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was borne away for his opinions, and she was persecuted for her beauty.

MISS P. Unfortunate beings!

DR. B. But tell me—

FLAM. Silence! The singularly beautiful girl looked for years for her heart's betrothed, but in vain; the young and elegant scholar, after ages of confinement in a dungeon, escaped to England, and strange to say, established an academy in Devonshire.

DR. B. Ah! what was his name?

FLAM. Hush! But the undiscovered fate of his bride still haunted him; he watched for every opportunity to get to the spot where they first met, but in vain; she, on the other hand, wandered distracted over the earth, in search of her soul's treasure, enduring insult and suffering, bathed in tears, steeped in agony. (*Sobbing.*)

MISS P. Oh, sir—

FLAM. Steeped in agony, and gaining a subsistence by teaching the French language to English detenus. You, HOMO, are that young and elegant scholar.

DR. B. (*Staring*). I?——

FLAM. And you, Miss P., that singularly beautiful girl.

MISS P. Sir, I'm sure—

FLAM. Hush! You are; you had also a little pledge of your affections.

MISS P. I defy any living creature to say such a thing.

FLAM. 'Tis truth: in your frenzied wanderings the poor infant was deserted, but he was adopted by others, was brought to this country, has attained wealth and honours, and is now burning with impatience to see his beloved parents, and settle upon them three hundred per annum.

BOTH. Indeed!

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FLAM. I now call upon you in the name of your beloved child, whom you have so long mourned as lost to you for ever, to renew your vows; repeat your marriage here, and be happy.

DR. B. I'm in a mist—three hundred per annum?

MISS P. A very genteel income!

FLAM. Very— But it is not interest that re-unites—'tis the recollection of your early loves—'tis parental tenderness; in your son you will exist again; in your son you will trace your mingled features; and when I reflect on his worth, and his wealth, tears of joy burst from my eyes as they now do from yours. Ah! check them not, my friends—you demand your child. (*Bell heard.*) My office bell—you implore to see the dear object.

(*Enter* FITZSMITH.)

FLAM. Behold your son. There stands your honoured (*they rise*) parents—your father and mother—throw yourself into their arms—you must—you shall—(*He pushes* FITZSMITH *over to them.*) My friends, accept your annuity, and embrace your son—(*They each take a hand of* FITZSMITH.) Noble and affecting picture—now indeed are my toils rewarded.

FITZS. But tell me—

MISS P. Elucidate—

DR. B. Explain—

FLAM. Nothing; I am going out, and will explain nothing till I return. You have found your parents—they must be introduced to your intended father-in-law at once. Madam, here is your husband;—here, sir, is your wife; and there the son, who settles an annuity upon you both. Now, you understand—step into my parlour—discover each others good qualities, and be mutually tender—my clerk shall wait

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on you with wine and cake. Mr. Fitzsmith, tear yourself from the arms of your parents, and come with me, Shrimp.

(*Enter* SHRIMP.)

FLAM. Attend this lady and gentleman with refreshments—here's the key of my cellaret—show them both into the parlour. (SHRIMP *opens the door*—DR. BIRCH *hands* MISS P. *in with great gallantry.*)

FLAM. You see—you see—they understand the whole affair. Now for my lord—then to instruct them how to act, and your happiness is complete. Don't stand staring at me in that way. Come, sir, to my lord—to my lord—you're a made man—you'll come in with a new batch of peers one of these days—you'll form a Ministry—*you'll* be Premier, and *I* shall be Lord Chancellor. (*He hurries* FITZSMITH *off.*)

SHRIMP. Ha! ha! I'm getting on in my situation. I never was trusted with the key of the cupboard before, he told me to attend them with refreshments. Very well. (*He opens a cupboard in the flat—a decanter of wine, and a plate of biscuits are seen on a shelf: he places them on the table.*) I never tasted wine in all my life—I know its drank out of little glasses—(*takes two wine-glasses from the closet*)—I shou'd like to taste a drop—wonder if them people can see me. (*He goes to the door, and looks through the keyhole.*) Oho! my stars, how he's kissing her hand; then master's managed the matter, I can see—they're too busy to think of me, so I'll help myself. (*He pours out a glass of wine, and is drinking it when the office bell rings: he swallows the wine with great agitation.*) There's the office-bell—what a pity! All the wine has gone the wrong way—can't be master already. (*He goes off*—DR. BIRCH *comes from the parlour, his cane in his hand.*)

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DR. B. Where's the clerk who was to wait *upon* us? Oh, the wine is placed out already.—very well. (*He lays his cane on the table, and takes the wine and biscuits into the parlour, closing the door after him.*)

Enter SHRIMP, *shewing in* MRS. NIBBLE.

SHRIMP. Mr. F. is out just now, ma'am. I don't think he'll be long before he comes in—will you take a seat, ma'am?

MRS. N. Thank'ye, sir.

SHRIMP. Calls me SIR! What a man I am getting—you was here this morning, I think, ma'am?

MRS. N. I was.

SHRIMP. I thought so; I know what you came about; better take my master's advice, or you may fall into a hobble.

MRS. N. Affairs have taken a turn since—by a most singular circumstance I have discovered that my poor husband is indeed no more.

SHRIMP. Oh!—an't you glad?

MRS. N. I am relieved from my suspence, I confess.

SHRIMP. Then now you can marry the old gentleman. You *can mum*—you may take *my* advice as far as that goes. It's quite as good as master's—better—'cause you get it for nothing. (*Goes up the stage.*) Hollo! they have help'd themselves I see. (*Looks through the key-hole.*) Ah! there they are. I shouldn't wonder if they won't be a very happy couple. Oh! here's his cane—(*Takes it from the table.*) a very handsome one. I wonder if the top is real gold—there are letters on it I declare—A. B. Ah! that's his coat of arms I suppose.

MRS. N. (*Observing the cane.*) What do I see?

SHRIMP. La! how you stare ma'am.

MRS. Who does that cane belong to?

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SHRIMP. A gentleman in the next room.

MRS. N. Allow me to examine it?

SHRIMP. Mustn't keep it though.

MRS. N. 'Tis the Doctor's I declare—his gold-headed cane with his initials engraved on it—I know it well. The gentleman to whom this belongs is here you say?

SHRIMP. In there. (*Points to door.*)

MRS. N. Indeed!

SHRIMP. With a lady.

MRS. N. Ah! for what purpose?

SHRIMP. Taking wine and cake.

MRS. N. With a lady? I never knew him to have a female acquaintance since I have been his housekeeper. (*Aside.*) Young man—

SHRIMP. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. N. Who is this lady?

SHRIMP. She in there?

MRS. N. Yes, yes.

SHRIMP. Shou'd you like to know what's going on?

MRS. N. I shou'd indeed.

SHRIMP. Such fun.

MRS. N. Well—

SHRIMP. Master has a fee when *he* informs people.

MRS. N. There's a trifle, young man.

SHRIMP. A shilling I declare! I shall raise my salary myself this week.

MRS. N. Well—that lady and gentleman in that room?

SHRIMP. Are going to be married.

MRS. N. To be married!

SHRIMP. Yes; don't you understand—he's going to take a *missus* to *master* him.

MRS. N. Here's a discovery! a hypocrite—after all his hints to me—

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SHRIMP. What's the matter, ma'am?

MRS. N. Nothing, young man—nothing. But tell me who is the lady?

SHRIMP. I don't know, she's come out of a newspaper.

MRS. N. Has advertised for a husband no doubt; and the infatuated Doctor—(*Aside.*) Your master then is employed in this affair?

SHRIMP. He's the man what's brought 'em together.

MRS. N. I'll look in again.

SHRIMP. Very well, ma'am.

MRS. N. I'll watch the house 'till the lawyer returns, and see the end of this I'm resolved.

(SHRIMP *is looking through the keyhole again as* MRS. NIBBLE *goes off with the cane.*)

SHRIMP. They are quite sociable, I declare, and nodding to one another with glasses of wine in their hands. What does that mean? Eh! where's the cane? That lady has gone away with it. Suppose she was only a thief after all, and has been getting a story out of me only to see if she cou'dn't steal something. I'll run after her. (*Bell rings.*) There's the bell; master no doubt. (*Pulls the string.*) What shall I say?

Enter FLAM.

FLAM. It's all arranged—all settled—

SHRIMP. Did you see a woman go out, sir?

FLAM. My client's mother? Not gone, I hope.

SHRIMP. No, sir, it was—

FLAM. Don't teaze me now—can't attend to any one else—get your hat—run to the law-stationer's for two marriage settlements, one twenty pound stamp, the other thirty shillings—quick—quick—no time must be lost. (*giving money.*)

SHRIMP. One twenty pound and the other—

FLAM. Thirty shillings.

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SHRIMP. I don't think I'll come back any more. (*Exit.*)

Enter FITZSMITH *and* HARRIETT.

FLAM. Now, my dear madam, your uncle has gone to his club, but will be here presently, when all will be arranged: his scruples are satisfied. I have told him your respected parents have arrived from their country seat in their carriage and four, and are impatient to meet him—confirm their son's happiness, and return to their peaceful retreat. Must get them out of the way the moment the business is arranged. Remain you here while I instruct your honoured father and mother what to do. (*Knocks at the door.*) Don't disturb yourself, 'tis only me. (*Opens the door and goes in.*)

FITZS. Will your uncle ever pardon this imposture, and yet without its assistance there is no hope for us.

HAR. I wou'd have you pause ere you proceed; you have been sincere towards me, and I will be equally candid with you. In marrying me you marry almost a beggar—the follies and extravagancies of my family have reduced them far beneath—

FITZS. Say no more dearest—I love you for yourself alone, and it is only in the hope of having an immediate right to save the fortunes of your house that I have lent myself to the schemes of this man. You have before explained the prejudices of your uncle, and perhaps when we are married he may find me so sincere a friend that all will be forgiven.

Re-enter FLAM *leading out* DR. BIRCH *and* MISS PUDDICOMBE.

FLAM. Come forth, my friends, and behold your happy children. Allow me, madam, (*to* HARRIET.) to introduce the father and mother of your intended—like his mother—striking—wonderful resemblance—his mother's eye to a T.

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—not much of the father—but boys always prefer taking after their mothers. (*Bell rings.*) There's my lud. Now the propitious moment has arrived. Let me place you in proper order to meet him. You must be affectionately seated between your parents. You, madam, (*to* HARRIETT.) must be at the table carelessly looking over the papers.

Places FITZSMITH *between his father and mother.* HARRIET *at the table. He then pulls the office bell-string, and takes his place ready to receive* LORD PEDIGREE.)

FLAM. (*To* BIRCH *and* MISS P.) Don't look so terrified—put a little joy into your faces—smile—smile! (*They force a smile.*) Hush! Ah! that will do.

(*Enter* LORD PEDIGREE. *They all rise. He bows with great condescension.* MRS. NIBBLE *enters behind, unobserved, and glides into the room at the back.*)

FLAM. The highly-respected parents of my client—— Permit me to say, that the delight they have expressed at their son's noble alliance, is greatly increased by the consciousness that their own illustrious descent is but one degree beneath that of your ludship's. (*Aside to* BIRCH.) Speak—support me—give him some Latin.

DR. B. Sir?

FLAM. Zounds! Don't say sir—my lud ———

DR. My lud—my son and my wife!

(*Bowing, confusedly, to* LORD PEDIGREE. MRS. NIBBLE *bursts from the room at the back, and stands between them.*)

MRS. N. What, sir—your wife!

DR. B. Madam, what brings you here?

FLAM. Who is this?

DR. B. My housekeeper.

FLAM. What! My anonymous client of this morning? The devil!

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MRS. N. I'll expose the whole plot!

FLAM. Silence, madam—silence—you must not intrude here. A poor lunatic, my lord, whose case I am conducting; she perpetually haunts my office, and annoys my clients; I must get her taken care of. Go home, my good woman—go home. (*Aside to her.*) Go, and I'll marry you myself.

MRS. N. *You* marry me, sir? My affections are not to be shifted from one to another so easily.

FLAM. Silence!

MRS. N. I shall not be silent. Is this your return for all my cares? Is this the end of all your gentle hints to me?

FLAM. My good woman ——

MRS. N. Away, wretch! (*Taking* BIRCH'S *arm.*) This person is my master.

FLAM. But you are not his, ma'am—not his. Don't be disturbed, my lord. Poor lunatic, her keeper will soon be here. Poor woman—poor woman! Don't be alarmed at her—MISS P. Humour her—humour her. Leave the office—(*To* MRS. NIBBLE.) You have no right here. Your first husband, who deserted you ——

MRS. N. I have none, sir—I am now at liberty. I have this person's promise in my pocket-book, and he shall abide by it. Release his arm, miss—my claim is prior. She is no wife of yours; (*To* DR. B.) and I here declare he has never had one; and as for his being the father of that young man ———

FLAM. Silence—let me speak.

MRS. N. Let me speak.

DR. B. Let me speak.

FITZS. Let me speak: I confess the imposture. This lady speaks the truth.

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FLAM. What! "Et tu Brute"—now bursts my mighty heart! Oh! (*Falls in the chair.*)

MRS. N. I learnt the whole affair from your clerk, sir.

Enter SHRIMP, *with rolls of parchment and a letter.*

SHRIMP. The marriage settlements, sir.

FLAM. (*Seizing him.*) Villain, you have betrayed the secrets of my office—you have ruined your master, and I discharge you on the spot—get out!

SHRIMP. What, Sir?

FLAM. Get out!

SHRIMP. A letter, sir—a letter for that gentleman. (*Points to* LORD P.) His servant brought it just now.

(FLAM *gives the letter to* LORD P., *and kicks* SHRIMP *out.* MRS. NIBBLE *holds the arm of* DR. BIRCH. MISS PUDDICOMBE *is trembling in the corner.*

LORD P. (*Reading the letter.*) Then all is lost. I am indeed a beggar!

FITZS. My lud!

LORD P. My steward has absconded. (*Hands the letter to* FLAM.)

FLAM. He has! (*Reads.*) 'Tis true, sir; he has gone to America; and I am sorry to say, has decamped with our only means of raising a shilling.

FITZS. But the estate that his lordship wished to mortgage

FLAM. We have now no title-deeds.

FITZS. I care not for any defect in the title: that estate I have set my heart upon, and will purchase it for thrice its value. I am without friends—without connections in life, and all that I possess shall be applied to restore the fallen fortunes of your house—the only return I ask is ————

LORD P. The hand of my niece. Take it, sir. Your generosity has at length conquered my prejudice, and I

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cannot but consider you my equal, possessing, as you do, that high quality which exalts all men—nobility of heart.

FLAM. Hear, hear! Now I'm jealous. This matter has been arranged without me, after all; and my delight has ever been to settle, not to embroil, affairs. However, there is something left for me to arrange. You Homo ————

DR. B. Doctor Birch, sir.

FLAM. Take my advice, Dr. Birch—marry your housekeeper; don't think of travelling; the schoolmaster has been abroad long enough; stay at home, and be happy. As for you, Miss P. ————

MISS P. Mary Puddicombe, sir.

FLAM. You are a disappointed woman, no doubt, yet my client, at no very distant day, may require the aid of so accomplished a lady in his establishment, when, be assured, you shall not be forgotten. But hold—I am nonsuited—I've lost my prize—the manor of "Stokum cum Pogis"——

FITZS. Shall still be yours.

FLAM. Then the verdict is in my favour, after all; for the property will not be encumbered; and now, having made my peace with you all, I have to appeal to a higher tribunal, where my judges and my jury sit enthroned in awful majesty before me.

My luds and gentlemen, suffer my good intentions in behalf of my clients to be considered ere you weigh the means I have employed to effect them. If those means have caused you to forget the troubles of life's lawsuit for one moment, I shall not touch your pockets—but your goodnature; and only ask, in return, that very handsome and stimulating fee—your approbation.

THE END.

BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

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UNCLE JOHN.

A PETITE COMEDY,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY J. B. BUCKSTONE.

PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
(*Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.*)

1833.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Uncle John ..... Mr. W. FARREN.
Nephew Hawk ..... Mr. WEBSTER.
Friend Thomas ..... Mr. STRICKLAND.
Edward Easel ..... Mr. BRINDAL.
Andrew ..... Mr. J. COOPER.

Niece Hawk ..... Mrs. GLOVER.
Eliza ..... Mrs. HUMBY.
Mrs. Comfort ..... Mrs. W. CLIFFORD.

This Comedy was represented for the first time, October 15, 1833.

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UNCLE JOHN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The interior of a well-furnished apartment. Folding doors at the back, through which is seen a garden. A door, R. H., 2nd entrance, chairs, &c. &c.* ANDREW *discovered looking at his memorandums.*

ANDREW. The presents for the bride have all arrived—the box of jewels, the gloves, the shawl—yes, all's right,—and now it wants but two hours of the time, when my old master will become a married man. Well, *he* knows best, but, in my humble opinion, were I to live till sixty without a wife, I shouldn't alter my condition so late in the day,—I wouldn't run the chance of being hurried out of the world eight or nine years earlier than I calculated upon, by the deadly risks of matrimony. If a man don't marry by forty, or say three-and-forty, he ought not to think of a wife at all, that's *my* opinion,—eh! what's that?—(*running to the window, L. H.*) Bless me, a coach!—visitors to the wedding I suppose. As sure as I'm Andrew, its my master's nephew and niece, Mr. and Mrs. Hawk—the only relations belonging to him in the world. I have been thinking of them two or three times, and wondering how it was they had never interfered in this matrimonial business!

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MRS. HAWK *heard without.*

MRS. HAWK. That will do William, that will do, I know my way, come dear, follow me.

AND. Here they are.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. HAWK *in travelling dresses.*

MRS. H. Ah, Andrew, good morning! How's dear uncle John?

HAWK. Quite well I hope.

MRS. H. Is he up yet?

AND. Oh, yes ma'am—been up these four hours!

MRS. H. Indeed! he was not such an early riser when we were last here?

AND. Its all owing to love, ma'am.

MRS. H. Love!

AND. Yes ma'am. It alters all people in some way or other; before he thought of being married, he never used to be out of his room before eight; now he's in the garden every morning at six, digging away as if he got his living by it. All to keep up his stamina, as he calls it—*his* stamina.

HAWK. Then he's still bless'd with a notion that his bodily strength is invincible!

AND. Oh, yes, sir, and is as happy as ever! He thinks the world and every thing in it excellent and beautiful; and that he is the heartiest and strongest man in it,—and says, he don't intend to die till he's an hundred.

MRS. H. As the idea is the offspring of a mind at ease, we must not undeceive him. Ah! if he was wasting every day like *me.*

HAWK. And our uncle is really going to be married!

AND. *Bony fidy.*

MRS. H. And this is to be his wedding day?

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AND. Yes ma'am.

MRS. H. Very extraordinary; he never informed us of it before yesterday. At breakfast a letter was laid upon our table, 'twas uncle John's writing, so we opened it immediately,—and what was our astonishment, when we read, that he was going to be married this morning, at eleven o'clock. "Dear, dear," said I to Hawk, "My love, how very strange that uncle John should never have mentioned the matter till this moment!"

AND. None of *us*—that is, none of the servants knew that he had really made up his mind till within these three days.

MRS. H. He didn't invite us to the wedding in his letter; but we considered the information to amount to the same thing; so we got ready as soon as possible—booked two places in the Marlborough coach—and here we are.

AND. He'll be very glad to see you, I dare say.

HAWK. Dear old soul! We owe every thing to him.

MRS. H. Every thing! When my first husband, Mr. Cheroot the tobacconist, died, I was left in very comfortable circumstances.

HAWK. Don't, my love—don't allude to past troubles.

MRS. H. We *must* allude to them sometimes, my dear, that we may the more appreciate our present happiness. I married you when I had been a widow a year; you were rather gay—

HAWK. And you were fond of Brighton—

MRS. H. No, dear; it was YOU.

HAWK. My love, you took apartments at four guineas per week—

MRS. H. Well, sir, my health required it.

HAWK. I merely mentioned it, my soul—

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MRS. H. In short, as my uncle knows our circumstances became embarrassed—he, dear *man*, was made acquainted with our troubles, and instantly relieved us by establishing us in business in Piccadilly.

HAWK. Where, thanks to the march of mind, and the public passion for cigars, we are again flourishing.

MRS. H. *(Sitting down, taking off her bonnet, and putting it on the table)* I shall make myself quite at home; take off your coat, dear—*(To* HAWK, *who takes off his great coat)*—And Andrew, will you be so kind as to tell our dear uncle that we are here, and that we have arrived to participate in his happiness, and wish him joy, and be delighted, and all that.

AND. Delighted, ma'am!

MRS. H. Of course, delighted! What? Andrew, come here. You are sorry; I think you are—

AND. At what, ma'am?

MRS. H. That your master is going to be married—must make some difference to you. You know, you servants can do what you please with a master; but a mistress is not so easily managed—eh, Andrew!

AND. Oh no, ma'am; it won't make the least difference to me. I only thought it rather odd that *you* should be so *very* delighted.

MRS. H. Why, sir?

HAWK. Andrew, no doubt, thinks, that as we are uncle John's only relations, and were he never to marry, his property might come to us, we may have some little reason not to seem so extremely delighted as we really are.

MRS. H. Lord bless me! we are very different sort of people, I assure you, Andrew. Some relations would have

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been offended, or cross, or insolent; but we—dear Hawk and I—we are too much rejoiced at the prospect of seeing the remainder of dear uncle John's days passed in domestic peace, to feel hurt; an't we, Hawk.

HAWK. Certainly.

AND. Well, I'll go and tell master you have arrived.

MRS. H. Do, Andrew; but don't hurry him, I beg. No doubt, on such a day as this, he is a little fidgetty and agitated—very natural—I have been twice in the same situation, and know the emotions well; so, tell him not to put himself out of the way on our account.

AND. I will, ma'am. They are not quite so pleased at this wedding as they pretend to be, *I* can see. (*Exit.*

MRS. H. Now, Mr. Hawk, listen to me. You must be very circumspect in your conduct to-day; you must watch my every gesture, or our best hopes will be destroyed.

HAWK. What a state of mind I am in, to think that his property, which we have so long looked upon as our own, should be in such jeopardy! in spite of his animal spirits and fine stamina; according to the course of nature, he can't live very long.

MRS. H. You must not betray your thoughts; we must humour him,—and proceed to break off the match—

HAWK. Which must be done in two hours. He shall *not* marry; 'twill be shameful, ridiculous—

MRS. H. Silence, Hawk; don't be so violent—(*producing a letter*) He tells us in his letter, that his intended is the only daughter of a lady that he has known for years; that she loves him as a father, and that he is certain of being happy.

HAWK. 'Tis that gawky little girl that we once saw here;

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he has educated and wasted his money upon her, forgetting his poor relations—his ties of consanguinity—but he shall not be married; and, should we succeed in preventing the match, I promise that you shall have a new cashmere shawl.

MRS. H. Hush! I hear his voice.

(UNCLE JOHN *speaks without.*)

UNCLE J. Lay breakfast in the summer-house, Andrew.

MRS. H. (*To Hawk*) Receive him affectionately, dear; and tell him how well he looks—here he is—Ah, my dear uncle John!

HAWK. Uncle John!

UNCLE JOHN *enters in a morning gown.*

UNCLE JOHN. Ah, niece! Ah, nephew! I did not expect this visit. The last time that I invited you here, you told me your business required so much attention you couldn't leave it.

MRS. H. That was six months ago; we were excessively busy—poor Hawk was up day and night. Well, my dear uncle, I am so glad to see you—(*shaking his hand, and pressing it affectionately.*)

HAWK. Though your letter did not contain any formal invitation, yet, on such an occasion we thought we could do no less than hasten to share in your happiness.

MRS. H. So we left every thing at sixes and sevens to come to you. How well you do look, uncle!

UNCLE J. I do look well; I know I do;—early rising and temperate habits—that's the plan. I am as hearty as the generality of men are at forty. This morning, at breakfast, I turned up the whole of my Dutch lettuce-bed—thirty feet square—eh! um!—few men of my age can do that, I think.

MRS. H. Wonderful!

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HAWK. Extraordinary man!

UNCLE J. Then went to breakfast—ale and a beef-steak; nothing else—no tea; no coffee—fine sparkling, invigorating home-brewed. No man, who wishes to renovate his stamina, should drink tea—pah! a weak, washy, squalid beverage! Give me your hand—(*to Hawk*)—There (*squeezing his fingers*)—did you ever know a man of sixty do that?

HAWK. Uncle, pray be merciful.

Uncle J. Eh! Ha! ha! ha!—like the grip of a blacksmith's vice, wasn't it? Put your thumb and finger here—(*doubling up his arm;* HAWK *puts his thumb and finger on the muscle*)—Eh! There's muscle—hard as a cannon-ball—eh! for a man of sixty—you should see me run, every morning a mile-and-a-half—fine exercise—fine exercise.

MRS. H. You have twenty years before you yet.

UNCLE J. Twenty!—forty! I have just been looking over the monthly obituary for Wiltshire; I found ten deaths at eighty, seven at ninety, three at a hundred—huzza! said I, I have forty good years before me yet. If I have a son, there's no doubt of my living to educate him—see him turn out a bright fellow, and inherit my estate.

HAWK. A son—ah! (*Sighing.*)

MRS. H. You were always a sanguine man, uncle. Well, I hope it may be so from my heart. How was it you never thought of marrying before?

UNCLE J. Never could meet with a woman that I considered suited to me; all of them now-a-days seem so nervous, so chilly, so lack-a-daisical, a breath of air kills them. I like air. I throw open windows, doors—sit in draughts—get wet through—roll in the snow—never do *me* any harm—hard as iron.

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HAWK. Your intended, you say, is—

UNCLE J. The daughter of my old friend, Mrs. Comfort; a dear little girl, just nineteen. I nursed her when a child, directed her disposition, educated her, as you know. She has had the best masters; she loves me, and why shouldn't I marry her, eh! I'm a country gentleman—we grow our own mutton—why not grow our own wife?

MRS. H. But, my dear uncle, she is nineteen you say; don't you think that is too young an age for a girl to marry at?—especially to one so much older than herself: a girl's affections cannot be fixed so early; the first man that pays them attention they look upon with interest, and think they are in love; but the real passion—the *genuine*, the *marrying* one, seldom attacks us till we are turned twenty.

UNCLE J. No lectures now—no lectures to me—I have never been used to them, and they don't agree with me. I've made up my mind.

MRS. H. Oh, my dear uncle, don't imagine for one moment that we are striving to make you uneasy—would'nt attempt such a thing for worlds. My dear uncle, your very suspicion hurts me extremely.

HAWK. Mrs. H. was merely giving an opinion, formed upon long observation—nothing more—no allusion to you—

MRS. H. No, indeed, no.

UNCLE J. Well, well; I believe you. William—

Enter a SERVANT.

Take my nephew's coat and hat. Mary shall wait upon you, niece. Excuse me a moment—merely going to dress. (*The* SERVANT *goes off with* MRS. HAWK'S *bonnet, &c., and* HAWK'S *coat and hat.*) Rather late for me to be seen in my morning gown; but I have been so very busy. Make yourselves

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quite at home. My bride will be here presently; I'll introduce you to her; but observe, no more allusions to my age. I'm worth more than an hundred of your young men yet. My stamina's sound, Sir—sound—no rheumaticks—no cough—lungs firm as a rock. (*Striking his breast.*) When I call my loudest, my voice cracks the room windows. Fine stamina, Sir—good appetite—excellent animal spirits—and with the best half of my teeth in my head, and the best half of my life to come, why shouldn't I have a wife?—Eh! to be sure. (*Exit.*)

MRS. H. (*Sinking in a chair at the table.*) Hawk!

HAWK. (*In another chair.*) My love.

MRS. H. I never saw uncle John so violent and determined before. He seems quite fixed.

HAWK. He does, indeed. I'm afraid he will have a wife.

MRS. H. And this beautiful house and estate—I should break my heart if I thought it would be lost to me.

Enter FRIEND THOMAS.

THOM. Ah! Mr. and Mrs. Hawk, how d'ye do?

MRS. H. Ah! Mr. Thomas!

HAWK. Some time since we last met, Mr. Thomas.

THOM. Yes; you are quite strangers here.

MRS. H. Been so busy, Mr. Thomas.

HAWK. Must look to business, you know, Mr. Thomas.

THOM. Certainly, certainly. Seen my old friend John?

MRS. H. I have. (*Sighing.*) Strange change about to take place in the family, Mr. Thomas.

THOM. A change, certainly, but for the best I hope.

MRS. H. Do you really think so, Mr. Thomas?

THOM. The girl seems very fond of your uncle.

MRS. H. But, Mr. Thomas, she's *so* young. Had uncle

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John turned his thoughts to some respectable woman, of an age more adapted to his own, don't you think, as a friend, it would have been more to his advantage?

THOM. Oh! I don't know;—the girl is a very good girl —in short, I recommended the match.

MRS. H. You, Mr. Thomas!

HAWK. (*Aside.*) Zounds! they're all alike—not a friend to be found.

THOM. I saw that she always seemed very anxious to please him, and to sing to him, and play the music to him; and he appeared so happy in her company, that I said to him, says I—"Old boy, if you will have a wife," says I, "why don't you marry her," says I. "So, says he, "I will" —and here's the wedding day, and there's an end of it.

MRS. H. (*Aside to* HAWK.) We shall have no assistance from *him.*

HAWK. None.

THOM. Ah! here she comes—here she is—her mother and all. I'm almost inclined to envy my old friend John, when I look at her.

Enter ELIZA *and* MRS. COMFORT, *dressed for the wedding.*

ELI. (*Taking Thomas's hand.*) Ah! Mr. Thomas.

THOM. Your intended's nephew and niece, my dear.

ELI. Mr. and Mrs. Hawk—I recollect them well. How d'ye do ma'am?

MRS. H. (*Kissing her.*) How d'ye do, my dear?

ELI. Mamma, Mrs. Hawk.

(MRS. COMFORT *and* MRS. HAWK *courtsey,* MR. HAWK *bows.*)

MRS. C. Give me your scarf 'Liza; you need not wear it in the house.

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ELI. You know all, I suppose, Mrs. Hawk?

MRS. H. Yes, my dear, and I wish you every happiness.

ELI, Thank ye, Mrs. Hawk.

Mrs. C. (*Arranging* ELIZA'S *dress.*) Do stand still 'Liza; you will put your dress quite out of order, and you can't look too nice on such an occasion.

ELI. Ha! ha!—I can't help laughing.

MRS. C. 'Liza! I'm ashamed.

ELI. Excuse me. What should you suppose I was thinking of?

MRS. H. Don't know, dear; though I am not surprized at your thinking; one's wedding day is a day for thoughts, and very serious one's too.

ELI. I'm too happy to have any serious thoughts—no—I was thinking that when I am married I shall be your aunt. Bless me how odd!—to think that I should be your aunt—never mind, I shall behave very well to you—you shall find me a very good aunt I assure you.

MRS. H. (*Aside to* HAWK.) Umph—she's patronizing us already.

THO. (*To the* HAWKS.) You approve of my friend's choice I hope.

MRS. H. How can I do otherwise? (*Aside to* HAWK.) A made up miss.

HAWK. Horrid taste uncle John must have.

ELI. Where is my dear friend?

MRS. H. Your dear friend!

ELI. I forget—I must break myself of that term now—your uncle has behaved so kind to me from my infancy, that I have always called him "my dear friend;"—when I was a girl he used to call me his little woman—when I grew older

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I was his pretty protegé—now I have grown up he calls me his intended—

MRS. C. And to-day dear, he will give you another name.

MRS. H. No, no—he'll return to the first, you will again be his little woman.

ELI. Here he is—

MRS. H. And dressed too—how well he looks.

ELI. How well he looks.

All. How well he looks!

Enter UNCLE JOHN *dressed for the wedding, followed by Andrew.*

UNCLE J. Ah my little woman (*taking* ELIZA'S *hand.*)

ELI. My dear friend.

UNCLE J. No, no—I'm not to be your dear friend now, I'm to be your husband—you must call me John—dear John at home, plain John in company—I hate to see married people dearing and ducking one another in public.

MRS. H. Very absurd—

UNCLE J. They always fight at home, don't they niece?

MRS. H. I should presume they do.

UNCLE J. Well, mother-in-law—you and I are old friends—eh; give me a kiss—

MRS. C. Oh for shame!

UNCLE J. Pooh—pooh—do as I like—there—*(kisses her heartily)* there's a kiss for you—eh?—that's the way—no turtle biting and mincing the matter for me—I like a good hearty sounding smack—one that you can hear a mile off. Andrew!—

AND. Sir—

UNCLE J. Get the breakfast ready in the summer-house—I've taken mine two hours ago, but I shall join you. Thomas

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you sleepy old mole (*shaking him*) be as lively as I am—rouse up, run to the church, tell 'em we shall be there precisely at eleven—and give the ringers a guinea—we must have a hearty peal—go—fly—vanish—(*Thomas runs out.*) Andrew!—

AND. Sir—

UNCLE J. The nicknacks.

AND. They're ready, Sir.

Enter two Servants at a sign from ANDREW, *bringing on presents.* ANDREW *goes off at the back.*

MRS. H. What is all this?

UNCLE J. A little whim of mine—I like to see these matters managed with taste. They are presents for my little wife—bridal presents.

ELI. For *me!*

UNCLE J. All for you—(*takes a packet from the first servant*) here are two dozen of white kid gloves—(*gives them to* ELIZA.)

ELI. Oh, thank ye—take care of them for me mamma.

MRS. H. Two dozen—how extravagant! (*aside to* HAWK.)

HAWK. Shameful! shameful!

UNCLE J. William, the shawl—(*A servant comes forward with an elegant shawl on his arm.*) There my love—a cashmere shawl—(*giving it to* ELIZA.)

MRS. H. Do you see Hawk?—(*aside to* HAWK.)

HAWK. I do indeed.

ELI. Thank you dear—

UNCLE J. John—call me John—

ELI. I can't just yet—I must get used to it by degrees—I fancy that I'm speaking to the footman when I say John—

MRS. H. (*Examining the shawl.*) It *is* indeed a real cashmere—a very expensive shawl that Uncle—

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UNCLE J. I suppose it is—when I make up my mind to be generous I never think of pounds, shillings, and pence—

MRS. H. Just the very one that I have wanted so long—*(aside to* HAWK.*)*

HAWK. Well, well,—be patient dear—*(aside.)*

UNCLE J. Thomas, the jewellery—

MRS. H. Jewellery!

HAWK. Oh!

A servant comes forward with a box of jewellery, UNCLE JOHN *takes the box from the servant, opens, and presents it to* ELIZA.

ELI. Beautiful! beautiful!—pearl necklace—diamond ear-rings! They are diamonds—I'm sure they are.

UNCLE J. Certainly. I never make presents of trumpery paste—no flour and water for me.

ELIZA *takes a necklace from the box and examines it with delight.*

MRS. H. Dear, dear, how splendid!

HAWK. *(With sadness.)* Extremely beautiful!

MRS. H. How uncle John has been wasting his money. *(Aside to* HAWK.*)*

HAWK. Ah! *(Sighing.)*

ELI. Did you ever see any thing so elegant ma'?

MRS. C. Very handsome indeed—now you must be very careful of them, and they must never be worn but at the assize ball, or—

UNCLE J. Pooh—pooh—she shall wear them whenever she pleases; I've no notion of making presents with restrictions as to their use—she may do as she likes with them—pitch 'em out of window—tie 'em round her poodle—any thing—when I make a present I make a present.

ELI. *(Putting on the shawl.)* I shall go to church in this.

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UNCLE JOHN *arranges the shawl upon* ELIZA'S *shoulders.* MRS. COMFORT *assisting. The servants go off.*

MRS. H. (*Aside to her husband.*) Charles, did you ever see any thing like it? What waste of the family's money. That box of jewellery must have cost an hundred pounds or more—and that shawl—a cashmere too—the very thing I had set my heart upon. (*Bursting into tears.*) I can't bear it—I can't bear it.

UNCLE J. Hollo! hollo!—What is all this?—my niece in tears. Jemima! Jemima!—what's the matter, woman?

HAWK. My poor wife, Sir, feels a little hurt at—at—

MRS. H. (*Aside to* HAWK.) Silence, Sir. Excuse me, dear uncle, 'twas a sudden burst of affection for you—and—I could'nt control my tears—could I, Hawk?

HAWK. No.

UNCLE J. For what? for what?

MRS. H. You know how dear you are to us.

UNCLE J. Yes—well—well?

MRS. H. It suddenly occurred to me, that when you are married you will quite forget your poor niece.

UNCLE J. Poor nieces don't allow their uncles to forget them so soon. They are everlasting memorandum books. Come, come; dry your eyes—(*wiping her eyes with his handkerchief.*) Give me a kiss. There, there—let me have no more tears: Its a bad omen. A man's wedding day, is the St. Swithin's day of his life. If it rains then, what the devil must he expect afterwards? By the bye, where's my friend Easel? *He* ought to be here.

ELI. He promised to come, and I shall be so unhappy if he disappoints us.

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MRS. H. Who is Mr. Easel?

UNCLE J. A young man—friend of mine.

MRS. H. A *young* man?

UNCLE J. Yes. An artist. Very clever fellow. My little woman's drawing master.

MRS. H. Indeed! (*Aside to her husband*)—Hawk, my dear this is worth attending to.

UNCLE J. He's to be father.

ELI. And give me away.

UNCLE J. Fine young fellow. Had three pictures in the academy last summer.

ELI. And sold them all.

UNCLE J. Clever young fellow—a genius.

ELI. I love him as a brother.

MRS. H. (*Aside to* HAWK.) She loves her husband as a father, and now she loves a certain young man as her brother.

HAWK. Affectionate creature—(*aside*).

Friend THOMAS *heard without.*

THOMAS. Just in time, Edward.

ELI. Here he is. Here he is.

Enter THOMAS *with* EDWARD EASEL.

EDW. Ah, my friends, a happy morning to you. My amiable pupil—(*taking* ELIZA'S *hand*).

ELI. I was afraid you would not come.

MRS. H. (*Aside to Hawk.*) Do yo hear? She was *afraid.*

UNCLE J. My nephew and niece, Edward; the only relations I have in the world at present.

EDW. Happy to see you, madam—(*taking* MRS. HAWK'S *hand*). Sir, your most obedient—(*bowing to* HAWK).

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Enter ANDREW *at the back.*

ANDREW. Breakfast is ready, sir.

UNCLE J. Come my little woman, take my arm. Mother-in-law, carry those things into your daughter's room. You know where it is.

(MRS. COMFORT, *in going off with the box of jewels and packet of gloves, curtseys as she passes* MRS. HAWK, *who sneers at her.*)

UNCLE J. Come Edward, you have not breakfasted, I know. You're a sluggard. Shocking habit—plays the very deuce with your stamina. Not like me—eh.

EDW. No, indeed.

MRS. H. Uncle John is a wonderful man at his age. Don't you think so, sir—(*to* EDWARD).

UNCLE J. My age! Damn it, niece, you never will cease alluding to my age. I am sixty; I know it; every body knows it. I'm a mere boy. Don't talk to *me*. Do you know how old Queen Elizabeth was, when she condemned the Earl of Essex to death for slighting her?

MRS. H. No.

UNCLE J. Then I'll tell you—sixty-eight.

MRS. H. Bless me; how improper.

UNCLE J. Do you know how old Mark Antony was, when he lost all for love of his Cleopatra?

MRS. H. No.

UNCLE J. I'll tell you—seventy.

HAWK. } Astonishing!
MRS. H. }

UNCLE J. And, if we may believe the classic parish registers, Helen of Troy was four-score when Paris stole her away.

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HAWK. } Indeed!
MRS. H. }

UNCLE J. And the war lasted ten years after that. I'm a boy—a mere boy. Come, my little woman, now for breakfast, and then for the parson—eh! Ha! ha! Come, my friends, follow me—follow me.

UNCLE JOHN *takes* ELIZA'S *arm, and walks briskly out with her at the back, followed by* FRIEND THOMAS *and* ANDREW.

MRS. H. (*detaining* EDWARD.) My dear sir—one word. Uncle John must have a very high opinion of you, to allow so young a gentleman to be the drawing master of his very young wife.

EDW. You don't suspect that I should presume upon—

MRS. H. No, no—certainly not; but opportunities might occur. In short, *I* should look upon you as rather a dangerous rival of my Uncle's.

EDW. (*Astonished.*) Madam!

FRIEND THOMAS *heard without.*

THO. Edward; we are waiting—come, come.

HAWK. I should like to have a little talk with you presently, if you can find time.

EDW. Certainly.

HAWK. In confidence.

EDW. Yes, yes.

THOMAS, *without.*

THO. Edward! (*without.*)

EDW. Coming, coming. EDWARD *goes out at the back.*)

MRS. H. (*Taking her husband's arm, and looking at him archly.*) My love.

HAWK. My duck.

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MRS. H. This young man is a perfect God-send. I think we can now set them all together by the ears with ease. Don't you think so, dear?

HAWK. Let me see. A young artist.

MRS. H. The bride his pupil. Don't you see? A little manœuvering, and the wedding may yet receive its death-blow.

HAWK. It may. My uncle's property is not yet lost to us.

MRS. H. No, dear; and I may yet have my cashmere shawl.

HAWK. (*With Glee.*) Come, my darling, to breakfast.

MRS. H. Come, my love.

UNCLE JOHN, *without.*

UNCLE J. Nephew, niece, where are you?

MRS. H. } Coming, dear uncle John.
HAWK. }

They go off at the back, in a very affectionate manner, HAWK *with his arm round her waist and in high spirits.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE.—*As before.*

Enter MRS. HAWK *and* ELIZA.

ELIZA. Is it really true Mrs. Hawk?

MRS. HAWK. It is indeed, dear Miss Comfort, and I am happy that I have been able to seize an opportunity of informing you: uncle John is now occupied in showing the party his gymnastics, so we can talk a little in quiet.

ELI. You say that Mr. Edward, my drawing master, is in love with me?

MRS. H. Breaking his heart about you, dear. Didn't you observe how very thoughtful he was during breakfast?

ELI. I certainly *did:* but as he's painting some great picture, he may be thinking of that.

MRS. H. No, my love! *You* are the object of his thoughts; I suspected it the moment he arrived; I could see in the first glance that he cast upon you, a rooted melancholy was in his heart. I have now an opportunity of learning the cause, and I find it to be a hopeless and despairing passion for *you*, Miss Comfort.

ELI. Bless me, how strange! Well, I declare! Good gracious! How many odd things I seem to recollect all at once. When he has been giving me my drawing lessons, I have frequently heard him sigh, and have caught him looking at me very strangely.

MRS. H. All affection.

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ELI. When I have asked him for the vermilion, he has given me the Indian ink.

MRS. H. All passion.

ELI. And he has frequently praised my bits of distance, when I've known them to be worse than the perspective on a china plate.

MRS. H. All love.

ELI. Poor fellow! If I marry uncle John, do you think he'll break his heart?

MRS. H. The consequences cannot be foreseen.

ELI. You don't mean to say, that he may do something dreadful?

MRS. H. An ardent and romantic mind, like Edward's, my dear, is hard to be controlled by reason.

ELI. How strange, he has never breathed a word of his passion to *me*.

MRS. H. True love is always diffident, dear.

ELI. I feel so uncomfortable—I can't bear the thought of seeing any one miserable; especially Edward, for whom I always had such a very—very—great friendship.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) She begins to love him already.

ELI. I'm very unhappy.

Enter HAWK *and* EDWARD.

HAWK. (*Whispering.*) 'Tis a fact.

EDWARD. Indeed!

HAWK. I assure you.

EDW. Well, well; say no more.

HAWK. Ha! she's here—hush!

(EDWARD *stops.* ELIZA, *who has been standing in an attitude of thought, suddenly looks up, and catches his glance.*)

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ELI. Oh! Is that you, sir? I—I.—Some one calls me. Coming, mother—(*runs off in confusion.*)

(MR. *and* MRS. HAWK *exchange looks of congratulation*)

HAWK. (*To* EDWARD.) Did you observe?

EDW. I did, indeed.

HAWK. I hope you are now convinced.

EDW. I certainly begin to think there is some truth in your hints.

HAWK. Truth! Bless you, my wife is in her confidence, and of course there are *certain* moments, Mr. Easel, when a wife cannot keep a secret from her husband.

EDW. How very unfortunate!

MRS. H. What are you two whispering about? How excessively rude.

HAWK. I've been mentioning to Mr. Easel—

MRS. H. What, dear?

HAWK. Eliza's little predilection for him.

MRS. H. Have you dared to betray my confidence, sir?

HAWK. Don't be angry with me, my dear.

MRS. H. I bound you to secrecy, Mr. Hawk.

HAWK. My feelings, my dear, got the better of my honour, and I thought it best to mention the circumstance to Mr. Easel before every hope was lost.

MRS. H. Extremely wrong of you, Mr. Hawk, I shall be cautious how I confide in you for the future.

EDW. Nay, madam, your husband had the best intentions.

MRS. H. No doubt, no doubt. Well, as you now know the secret, there can be no necessity for any mystery between *us*. *Very, very* unfortunate thing, my dear sir! You can't think how uncomfortable it has made me.

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HAWK. Don't, dear, don't—avoid comment—'twill but make matters worse.

MRS. H. How providential the passion is not mutual!

HAWK. (*Looking at Edward.*) Very providential.

MRS. H. Tho', no doubt, you have always had a very great friendship for Eliza.

EDW. To confess the truth, I have madam, and respect for your uncle has alone prevented my encouraging thoughts —but, madam, I implore you not to allude to this subject again, matters have gone too far to permit of any hope. Eliza will be married to-day, and *must* forget me.

HAWK. Might I advise?

EDW. I'll not listen to another word, sir, let what is passed between us be forgotten. I owe much to your uncle, and will not be ungrateful. Eliza, too, must conquer her feelings,—she must reflect how kind he has been to her! and I conjure, I implore, nay, sir, I command you not to recur to this subject again! If you *do*, sir, I shall consider it an officious insult, and resent it accordingly. (*rushes off.*)

MRS. H. Charles, dear!

HAWK. Jemima, love!

MRS. H. I shall have my cashmere shawl.

HAWK. I think so love! (*embracing her.*)

Enter friend THOMAS.

THO. Hey day! What's the meaning of all this?

HAWK. Of what, friend Thomas?

THO. I just now met the bride in the garden, and found her in tears.

MRS. H. (*Aside to Hawk.*) D'ye hear? love's in tears!

HAWK. In tears, Mr. Thomas!

THO. Then, as I was coming in here, Mr. Easel rushed

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out, and almost knock'd me down,—he begg'd my pardon, and said he was distracted.

MRS. H. (*Aside to Hawk.*) D'ye hear dear? distracted!

HAWK. Distracted; Mr. Thomas!

THO. Then, as I enter the room, a little scene of connubial tenderness is interrupted by me.

MRS. H. Oh! Mr. Thomas. Poor Hawk and I—we are a pair in a thousand,—there are few such truly happy couples to be found. I only hope the new man and wife may be as comfortable!

THO. "You only hope," what do you mean?—you speak as if you had a doubt.

MRS. H. Sixty and nineteen, Mr. Thomas, think of that!

THO. Take nineteen from sixty, there remains forty-one.

HAWK. A heavy balance against poor sixty!

MRS. H. Now, Mr. Easel is twenty-five.

HAWK. Ah! (*sighing and shaking his head.*)

MRS. H. Ah! (*imitating him.*)

(*Mrs. H. whispers Hawk—pointing to Thomas.*)

HAWK. (*To Thomas.*) As you are an old friend of uncle John's, we think it but right to tell you that his marriage today will be the cause of misery—

THO. Misery!

HAWK. To Eliza and Mr. Easel.

THO. Bless me!

HAWK. We have discovered, in a most miraculous manner, that they are irrevocably attached to each other.

MRS. H. Very shocking, eh, Mr. Thomas?

THO. Shocking! Its dreadful!—this, then, accounts for *her* tears and *his* distraction; I'm petrified—friend John must know of this.

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MRS. H. No, no!

HAWK. }
MRS. H. } No, not for worlds!

THO. He *shall*, he *must*—Zounds! do you think I can allow my old friend, that I honour and respect as a man to run the risk of becoming a monster? No, no! I have been married myself, and my sympathies will not permit it.

MRS. H. Well! well! you know his temper best. If you *will* tell him I should advise you to break the news very gently, for after all his anxiety, care, and expense, it will be a terrible blow—

UNCLE J. (*Calls without.*) Andrew!

MRS. H. He's coming (*looking out.*)

THO. I'll open his eyes though he says I can't my own.

MRS. H. Be cautious Thomas, be cautious how you break the matter, he's here.

Enter UNCLE JOHN. *(His coat on his arm.)*

UNCLE J. Where are all the people? Where are they all?

MRS. H. Shall come to you again Uncle in a moment. (*Takes* HAWK'S *arm and hurries off.*)

UNCLE J. Well, if this is the fun of a wedding morning, I must say it don't meet my expectation in any shape. Where have they all got to? Where are all the people?

THO. I don't know—

UNCLE J. There were Eliza, Edward, and my nephew and niece, and all of you in the garden just now—laughing, and happy, and admiring me—to amuse you I thought I'd take off my coat and run up the hill (my training hill as I call it) —off I started—up I went—never once stopped for breath—

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wind excellent, sir—when I came back not a soul was to be seen—

THO. Ah! *(sighing and shaking his head.)*

UNCLE J. Eh! what does that mean? Any thing wrong?

THO. No! no! Ah!

UNCLE J. No, no, and Ah!—Why you drowsy old mandarin—get to bed again, you've risen too early—your heavy eyes are not open yet—here am I ten years older than you, lively as a lark—zounds man, if you stand blinking at me in that manner I'll jump over you and astonish you.

THO. Oh this world! this world!

UNCLE J. Well, what's the matter with the world? *(Putting on his coat.)*

THO. I'm disgusted with it.

UNCLE J. *You,* you moping old mole what d'ye mean? Abuse the world! Have *you* joined in that wretched cant? It's a splendid world sir, a fine world: beautiful atmosphere, lovely skies, noble clouds, hills, rivers, dales, woods, meadows, sea—all beautiful, magnificent; what's the matter with the world? Don't talk to me, it's a fine world! a splendid world! there's a few damned people in it—that's all sir, but the world it's self sir; Ha! ha! a charming world!

THO. Well! well its lucky it has been discovered in time—

UNCLE J. Discovered! who discovered it?

THO. I allude to another matter at this moment.

UNCLE J. *(Seizing him by the collar with both hands.)* What are you trying to be delivered of? Why is this groaning and blinking? Speak sir, or I'll pitch you on my back and run a mile with you. *(Shaking him.)*

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THO. Come, come, don't pull me about in that way—I don't like it.

UNCLE J. What's the matter with you?

THO. I shan't tell you—

UNCLE J. What? I'll give your ear such a fillip with my thumb and finger it shall fly off into the next county.

THO. No, don't. Your bride Eliza—

UNCLE J. Well!

THO. Is making a fool of *you*.

UNCLE J. Eh!!

THO And a wretch of *herself*.

UNCLE J. What?

THO. She has consented to marry *you*, but she don't care a straw for you; her heart is another's.

UNCLE J. (*Shaking him.*) What do you mean?

THO. What I say!

UNCLE J. Thomas, Thomas, you've been drinking my health!

THO. Not since last night.

UNCLE J. You've been tumbling head over heels and have hurt your head.

THO. I tell you I know what I'm saying; your bride is in love with the drawing master!

UNCLE J. Thomas, I know you're a man that would not hurt my feelings for the world. Are you serious?

THO. I am.

UNCLE J. You are speaking the truth?

THO. I am.

UNCLE J. How did you discover this?

THO. In a most miraculous manner.

UNCLE J. Zounds!! Am I awake?—I must have this

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matter explain'd.—Where are they?—Come with me Thomas—(*seizing his arm violently.*)—Come with me.—If this is true, there will be dreadful doings; I shall go stark mad in the first place,—and if it's a lie I shall murder you for telling it.—Come Thomas—(*dragging him about*).

THO. Stop! I see them coming.

UNCLE J. Who?

THO. Eliza and the young man.

UNCLE J. (*Looking out*) He's following her, sure enough.

THO. (*Urging him to the door*) This way—this way—I'll watch them for you.

UNCLE J. No! no! I'll have no listening—no watching.

THO. You had better be convinced. Come in, I say; come.

UNCLE J. If you *will* go in, *go* in; don't stand mumbling and poking me about in that manner; go in—(*pushes* THOMAS *violently off, banging door after him.*)

Enter ELIZA.

ELIZA. What a time mamma stops in my room. I wish she'd come to me. *My room!* For the first time in my life I feel uncomfortable on thinking a room in this house will be mine. Bless me! here's Edward following me. Where are all the party? he's here—I wish I could run away—(*sits in a chair.*)

Enter EDWARD.

EDW. How wretched I am! Every body seems to be avoiding me. Ah, miss! are you here?

ELI. Yes, sir.

EDW. Alone, I see.

ELI. Yes, sir.

EDW. Where's—my friend?

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ELI. I don't know; I have not seen him since he took off his coat to run up the hill.

EDW. It's very strange he's not here.

ELI. Every thing seems very strange, I think.

EDW. (*Taking a chair*) Heigho!

ELI. Poor fellow! how he's sighing—Heigho!

EDW. Dear girl!—How she heighos! She's breaking her heart.

ELI. I wish I had known how he loved me a month ago.

EDW. Had she given me the slightest token of affection—the least encouragement—we might have been happy.

ELI. I had better speak to him, poor fellow! Mr.—Mr. Easel.

EDW. Madam!

ELI. Did you ever read Robinson Crusoe?

EDW. Yes, Madam. Why?

ELI. I don't know why—except that—every thing seems so lonely here all at once. That book put me in mind of it.

EDW. (*Drawing his chair nearer to her.*) Eliza—that is—Miss, you—you seem unhappy.

ELI. Oh! dear no. Heigho.

EDW. How she strives to conquer her feelings. I can't endure it. I must quit this house immediately, Eliza! (*violently*).

ELI. How you frighten'd me.

EDW. Adieu! Farewell—(*taking her hand*).

ELI. Where are you going?

EDW. Far away. To Italy—to—any where—to secure your happiness.

ELI. Won't you stay to be my father?

EDW. I could not support the trial.

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ELI. (*Aside.*) He *does* love me indeed. Oh! I feel greatly interested in him.

EDW. No one is near, and I shall not have another opportunity of bidding you farewell.

ELI. If *you* will go, I can only say I shall always think of you with regret.

(UNCLE JOHN *and* THOMAS *are seen peeping from the door.*)

EDW. I shall devote myself entirely to my art; and should you ever hear my name mentioned with honour, you will, I know, feel some little pride in saying that I was once your master.

ELI. We must strive to forget each other: it will be best, indeed it will.

EDW. Farewell. I cannot stay to witness your marriage. Tell my friend that I have been called away on most urgent business, tell him—(UNCLE JOHN *and* THOMAS *close the door;* EDWARD *looks round*). No one is near: one kiss, Eliza—the first and the last.

ELI. No! no, be prudent.

EDW. But one. (*He takes her hand and kisses it.*)

UNCLE JOHN *and* THOMAS *come quietly from their hiding place.* UNCLE JOHN *behind* ELIZA, THOMAS *behind* EDWARD. EDWARD *kisses* ELIZA'S *lips.*

UNCLE J. A-hem!

ELIZA *looks up, screams, and rushes off.* EDWARD, *in confusion, runs out.* UNCLE JOHN, *with a look of consternation, falls into one chair,* THOMAS *into the other.*

UNCLE J. Thomas!

THO. John!

UNCLE J. You're right. There *is* something the matter with the world—some horrible convulsion of nature has dis-

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organized it. The sun's gone out, it has; or the chaste moon has eloped with some roué of a comet.

THO. I told the truth, you see.

UNCLE J. Don't go in a passion, Thomas: I know you can scarcely contain your rage; but be cool, be cool, as I am—(*violently*).

THO. I'm horrified.

UNCLE J. Why are you in such a fury?

THO. I'm not in a fury.

UNCLE J. You are; you're choaking with rage. Why don't you look upon the business with the eye of a philosopher—of a philosopher—(*banging his chair about*). Look at me; look at my face; I'm a picture of firmness—a picture, sir. I ought to sit for my portrait now—now, this moment. Portrait of a gentleman of sixty, controlling his temper.

Enter MRS. COMFORT.

MRS. C. My dear son-in-law, what's the matter with 'Liza?—the poor girl has just been with me in a dreadful state of agitation, and crying her eyes out. What's the matter?

UNCLE J. Did'nt she tell you?

MRS. C. I could get nothing from her but sobs.

UNCLE J. Mrs. Comfort, if I were not a philosopher—a man of sound sense—instead of my being quietly seated in this chair, with my hands in my breeches pockets, and perfectly composed, you would see me dancing about like a demon, knocking every body down that came in my way, cutting *your* throat, and blowing out *my* brains.

MRS. C. Sir!!

UNCLE J. In one word, I won't be married—that is, not to-day. I shall postpone it for a year or two. You may stare.

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I've plenty of time before me. Though I've no objection to be a useful member of society, I've a decided aversion to becoming one of its ornaments! You're a widow, and must understand me. Come, Thomas, you and I will take a walk.

(*He seizes* THOMAS'S *arm violently, and rushes out with him.*)

MRS. C. What can all this mean—the match broken off! What *can* be the matter? I strongly suspect *that* nephew and niece are at the bottom of all this; if I thought so, I'd play the very deuce with them.

Enter MRS. HAWK.

MRS. H. Ah! Mrs. Comfort, are you here? What's the matter with uncle John? he and his friend passed me just now in a most singular manner.

MRS. C. You are perfectly acquainted with the cause of uncle John's manner I have no doubt.

MRS. H. *I*, dear Mrs. Comfort?

MRS. C. Yes, Madam *you*; and if this match *is* broken off—

MRS. H. (*Affecting astonishment.*) The match broken off, did you say?

MRS. C. And my daughter's prospects ruined, I shall consider it entirely owing to you.

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) We have succeeded—there will be no wedding, and I shall have my cashmere shawl. My dear Mrs. Comfort, in what way can I have interfered?

MRS. C. People can cause a great deal of dissension without openly interfering.

MRS. H. What do you mean, dear Madam?

MRS. C. Hints and whispers, and looks, are sometimes more mischievous than downright assertions.

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MRS. H. Do you imagine, Madam, that I should condescend to hint, and whisper, and look?

MRS. C. A designing woman will condescend to any thing that may forward her views.

MRS. H. Then, in your opinion, *I* am a designing woman?

MRS C. To be candid with you, that *is* my opinion.

MRS. H. Then, to be equally candid with *you*, Madam, allow me to say, that I blush for you.

MRS. C. Blush for *me*, Madam!

MRS. H. Yes, Madam! to see a woman of your years consenting to such an unequal match as the marriage of my dear uncle John with your child of a daughter.

MRS. C. *My* years, Madam! what do you mean by my years? You are not aware I presume, that I was but seventeen, when I married poor Mr. Comfort.

MRS. H. I can easily imagine you were quite forward enough.

MRS. C. You insolent creature!—

MRS. H. Don't lose your temper.

MRS. C. Oh! dear no;—I shall not lose my temper you may depend upon it—you designing—you mischief-making woman, you—you're fifty, you know you are.

MRS. H. How dare you make that assertion, I fifty! if I am madam, you are ten years older.

MRS. C. Me! I have friends that can prove—

MRS. H. Any thing no doubt—

MRS. C. I'll leave the house instantly, I'll not submit to be insulted in this manner—Eliza—(*calling*) my dear come to your mother, we'll go home Eliza—we'll go home.

Exit Mrs C.

(*A crash heard. Enter* UNCLE JOHN *in a great fury, he*

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overturns tables, &c.—every thing but one chair, into which he flings himself.)

UNCLE J. There—there—there—there, now I've vented my rage, I shall be more composed—I feel better now—I've torn all the apple trees up by the roots, pitched the wheel-barrow into the road, thrown the garden roller through my neighbour's skylight and now I'm happy.

MRS. H. Dear uncle John,

UNCLE J. Don't bother me; leave me to myself.

Enter Andrew.

ANDREW. Oh sir!

UNCLE J. What's the matter now?

AND. Mr. Easel and your nephew Hawk have quarrell'd.

UNCLE J. Of course, every body *will* quarrel to-day, should'nt wonder if there wont be murder before night.

AND. Not at all unlikely sir, for they have gone out to fight.

MRS. H. To fight!

AND. In the shooting ground, close by.

MRS. H. Oh! my poor Charles, where is the spot sir? where is it? shew it me, he will be killed.

UNCLE J. Yes, he'll be kill'd, its highly necessary that he should, to complete the horrors of my wedding day.

AND. Mr. Thomas has gone for the constables.

MRS. H. Uncle John, why don't you run and prevent bloodshed? How can you sit here, and know your nephew's life to be in danger?

AND. *(At the back)* There they are madam, there they are.

MRS. H. *(Running off)* Where?

AND. Measuring the ground.

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MRS. H. (*Without*) Help! Murder! Help!

Two pistols heard in the distance, MRS. HAWK *screams without,* UNCLE JOHN *capers about.*

UNCLE J. Its done, somebody's kill'd; I'm glad of it, now there's a climax to the events of this day; scream again Mrs. Hawk, I like it.

AND. Sir! master!

UNCLE J. Well,

AND. I strongly suspect that your nephew and niece are two serpents.

UNCLE J. (*Seizing him.*) None of your zoological hints to me sir—speak out if you've any thing to say—don't think to shock me, I'm proof against any thing now, fire!—murder—any-thing—I'm iron—

AND. I heard them say more than once this morning that come what might, your marriage should not take place.

UNCLE J. Ah! you heard that?

AND. I did sir.

UNCLE J. A thought strikes me,—a suspicion flashes across me—but then the scene I witness'd between Eliza and Mr. Easel, I'm bewilder'd (*falls into a chair.*)

THOMAS. (*Without.*) Come along, come along, It's all over.

(*Enter* THOMAS, *with two discharged pistols, followed by* MR. and MRS. HAWK. HAWK *pale and leaning on his wife,* EDWARD *enters.*)

THO. There's no harm done, I've arranged the dispute, and discharged their pistols in the air.

UNCLE J. What did you do that for? I wanted somebody to be kill'd, you know I did: this is the first day I ever had one unhappy moment, and somebody ought to be kill'd.

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Enter MRS. COMFORT, and ELIZA, *dressed as in the First Act.*

ELIZA. Come Ma' we'll go home—

UNCLE J. You shan't go home,—stay where you are. Andrew, close the doors, and let no one go out or come in. (*Andrew closes the centre doors after him.*) Now I must have all this confusion investigated; you Hawk and Easel have had words.

MRS. H. (*Aside to* HAWK.) Speak out love boldly, don't be afraid.

HAWK. Mr. Easel insulted me uncle, and as I was burning to resent your wrongs—

UNCLE J. What right had you with my wrongs? zounds sir, d'ye think I can't resent my own? look here (*slapping his arm*) this is *my* weapon, no fire arms, no pistolling for me, a good old English fist sir, which shall knock you down sir, if you dare to interrupt me at this moment.

EDWARD. I cautioned your nephew against recurring to a subject that I am afraid has caused some dissension, he slighted my caution. I was distracted, enraged, I challenged him and we met,—

MRS. C. Allow me to say one word, (*To* UNCLE JOHN.) You have behaved very kind to my daughter from a child sir, for which as her mother, I thank you from my heart; you intended to marry her, but as I perceive the match is opposed by your relations, I think it really necessary it should be broken off. (*sobbing.*) My child's prospects are destroyed, but all is for the best, Come 'Liza.

ELIZA. I'm quite ready ma'. (*Sobbing.*) I did not think I should have been so unhappy on *this* day. Good bye, my dear friend. (*Taking the hand of* UNCLE JOHN.) I am very

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grateful for all that you have done, and shall ever remember your kindness with thankfulness.

UNCLE J. (*Pressing her hand to his lips, and sobbing.*) Thomas! you soft-hearted fool, what are you doing? Why do you stand blubbering there like a great boy?

THOM. I'm not shedding a tear.

UNCLE J. You *are;* you are breaking your heart. Why don't you look at me—(*sobbing.*)—and be iron as I am. (*Wiping his eyes with handkerchief.*)

MRS. H. My dear uncle John, I hope you don't suspect that I have at all interfered to mar your happiness; if I thought so, I should be wretched, I should never know any peace again. (*Sobbing.*)

UNCLE J. Zounds! we're all snivelling; I must put an end to it. I've been a happy man all my life—perfectly happy, and why should I begin to be miserable now? I like to see every body happy, if I can make them so. (*Roaring at* THOMAS.) Be happy, you old drone.

THOM. Well, I am, I am.

UNCLE J. Sir,—(*to* EASEL.)—you are awake that I witnessed a circumstance which has been the chief cause of this confusion?

EDW. I am, Sir; but I assure you I had no intention of wronging you. Your nephew and niece, certainly, raised emotions in my heart that I strove to subdue, and my wish was to leave this place immediately, and for ever.

UNCLE J. Umph! You have a liking for that girl—you have, Sir;—let me have no lying—no evasion: and you, Miss, have no disinclination towards this young man; your gratitude would not have allowed you to refuse *me;* but you secretly wished I could have been forty years younger;

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that was impossible, as far as regards myself; but you shall still have your wish. There—(*joining* ELIZA *and* EDWARD'S *hands.*)—take your drawing-master, it is my *desire*, my *command;* bless you both, and be happy!

Mrs. H. Oh, my dear uncle John! I thought you were a man of more sense than to part with your liberty after so long an enjoyment of it. How nobly he has acted, and of self and feeling, what a tremendous sacrifice, as the linen drapers say. Dear uncle John!

HAWK. Quite a domestic patriot—quite a Cato.

Mrs. H. (*Aside.*) Hawk, my dear, the shawl is mine?

HAWK. (*Putting his arm round her waist.*) Yes, love.

UNCLE J. And now, as I *will* have a wife, I shall marry *you*, my Comfort.

MRS. H. *Uncle!*

HAWK. Sir!

THOM. John!

ELI. My dear friend!

MRS. H. Uncle John!

UNCLE J. Ah! *you* may all start and stare; but this is my fixed determination. Look at me, Mrs. Comfort; you can't refuse me—fine stamina, Madam; there's a leg—Eh! will you have me? say the word—a delicate yes, or a plain no.

MRS. C. You have really taken me so completely by surprise, that—well as you insist, I shall not object—(*giving her hand to him*).

Mrs. H. (*Crying.*) This is shameful; this is scandalous: I could not have thought it of you, uncle.

HAWK. My dear, you will not have your cashmere shawl.

MRS. H. Uncle John, I shall no longer conceal my senti-

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ments towards you; you are welcome to your wife, or rather your nurse. You will soon require the advice and assistance of your now despised nephew and niece; but we have done with you for ever—from this time forward, you forfeit all claim on our esteem. Hawk, get your coat and hat immediately. We will return to London, and leave these objects to their fate: go, sir, do as I order you! (*She thrusts* HAWK *off violently, and follows him.*)

UNCLE J. Ha! ha! ha! Now we are all comfortable again, and—(*looking at his watch*)—if we make haste, we shall yet be in time for the parson. Eh, Thomas, hav'nt I acted like a hero? To be sure, I like to see every body happy. It is a beautiful world, say what you will; and there are many happy days to be met with in this life worth living for, if we but know how to enjoy them. Eh! Thomas? Of course there are *some* evil-minded people ever ready to mar the joy of others, like my nephew and niece; but if they are not to be found in these merry parties before us—(*to the audience*)—what have we to fear? Nothing. Then, indeed, will UNCLE JOHN's happiness, and his love of every thing and every body, be complete; and he may yet enjoy his splendid world, excellent muscle, and fine stamina, for his remaining forty years.

THE END.

Printed by Harjette and Savill, 107, St. Martin's-lane, Charing Cross.

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THE

CHIMNEY PIECE.

A FARCE,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

G. HERBERT RODWELL,

AUTHOR OF

"TEDDY THE TILER," "WAS I TO BLAME," "I'LL BE YOUR SECOND," &c. &c.

PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN,

(Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

1833.

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W. GLINDON, PRINTER,
51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

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DEDICATION.

TO

W. FARREN, ESQ.

SIR,

IT was to you I owed the production of the following Farce;—it was to you, no less, I owed it's success;—I feel, therefore, it is to you I now owe it's DEDICATION, which I hope you will receive with the warmest thanks of

THE AUTHOR.

Brompton,
August 4th, 1833.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Mr. Muddlebrain, a Disciple of Sir Humphrey Davy ..... Mr. W. FARREN.

Frederick, his Brother in Law, ... Mr. BRINDAL.

Shuffle, formerly Waiter at a Gambling House, ... Mr. BALLS.

John Horn, an old Domestic, ... Mr. AYLIFFE.

Officer, ... Mr. COOKE.

WOMEN.

Lucretia, Wife to Mr. Muddlebrain, ... Mrs. NESBITT.

Mary, her Servant, ... Mrs. HUMBY.

This Farce was represented for the first time March 23, 1833.

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THE CHIMNEY PIECE.

SCENE I.

A Chamber, in the centre of which is a large Chimney Piece in the olden style. A Door on each side of the Chimney; two other Doors at sides, and a Window with Shutters.

MARY, SHUFFLE, *and* JOHN HORN *are discovered, arranging the Furniture.*

MARY. Three movings they say are as bad as one fire! If so, since I have lived with him, master has been as good as burnt out of house and home at least half a dozen times. This is the eighteenth house he has had in five years. Move, move, move, he's for ever moving! Like—like—

JOHN HORN *(coming forward).* Like your tongue. But remember, mistress Mary, it's not always his fault, for since he's become what he calls a disciple of Sir Humphrey Davy, the great chymist, and a student in natural magic, nobody will allow us to remain half a year in their houses. True, he did blow off the roof of one with his chymistry, and frightened two old maids out of their wigs by raising the devil as they said.

(A flash of light is seen to issue from door, at side of chimney.

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SHUFFLE. *(starting)* Yes, and he's doing so now I think. Did you see that?

MARY. Yes—He's trying now to extract butter from sea sand, or some such nonsense. We've only been two days in the house, and it smells of sulphur already as if old Nick had been here for a month.

Enter Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN, *carrying a Flower Vase.*

Mrs. M. Here, Mary, place this on the chimney; and tell me where is your master?

MARY. At his natural magic, ma'am. *(puts the vase on the side of the chimney.)*

Mrs. M. Heigho! Poor infatuated man. Thus does he ever neglect me. He has read the works of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Humphrey Davy, and other learned men, until he almost believes that nothing really exists in the world, but in imagination. (*turns and sees* SHUFFLE.) Mary, who is this young man?

MARY. That's my cousin, ma'am, just stept in to lend us a helping hand in placing the things.

Mrs. M. Your cousin! you've a great many cousins, Mary. This is a brother I suppose to the tall grenadier I found in the pantry last week. Come John Horn, come with me. *(Exit.*

JOHN HORN *(following slowly.)* I fly, ma'am. *(Exit.*

SHUFFLE. What the devil did she say about a tall grenadier, and the pantry? Mrs. Shuffle! Mrs. Shuffle!

MARY. Hush! Are you mad? Do you want to tell all the world that we're married, and get me turned away?

SHUFFLE. No; but the grenadier?

MARY. Came to see the cook; so to prevent all the fat being in the fire, I cousined him, and made him a relation.

SHUFFLE. Yes; and remember you've cousined me too.

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MARY. To be sure I have; for you know master never will have a married maid; for he says their husbands are always about the house, and that annoys him.

SHUFFLE. But why?

MARY. Because he imagines they live at his expence.

SHUFFLE. Absurd; live at his expence indeed—as for myself I have too much pride—he need'nt be afraid of me. By the bye, I'll give you the basin I took away the turtle in yesterday. *(takes a basin from his back pocket.)* They're pretty careful I think.

MARY. Never mind, as the place is so good.

SHUFFLE. Yes; but I don't like to be your husband, and not your husband. But why not intrust your mistress?

MARY. I have thought of doing so; *(mysteriously)* I think she'll want my assistance soon, for I've caught her, while my master's at his natural magic, peeping at a handsome young man next door.

SHUFFLE. No!

MARY. Yes!

SHUFFLE. You don't say so?

MARY. But I do though; and if master don't look sharp, he'll find that mistress has more natural magic in her sparkling eyes than he can find in all the musty old books since the creation. Let him take care, I say, that she doesn't, one of these days, by love's chymistry, transform him into something he won't like to be called.—Here she comes.

Enter Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN *and* JOHN HORN.

Mrs. M. Your cousin not gone, Mary.

MARY. No ma'am; but he's going *(aside)* into the pantry.

(Mrs. M. *goes to window.*

SHUFFLE. *(to* MARY.) Which is your room?

MARY. That—but why?

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SHUFFLE. I shall be here at seven.

MARY. Here? Impossible.

SHUFFLE. Leave that to me; I've a way of getting into this house which—but, mum!—up, down, through. I cannot explain to you now—that's my natural magic.

MARY. What do you mean?

SHUFFLE. Hush!

Mrs. M. *(looking out of window.)* Still at his window. If I could but let him know.

MARY. *(aside to* SHUFFLE.) She's looking at the young man at this moment. I should like to tell master, but he'll hear nothing but—— *(An explosion is heard.*

Mrs. M. Gracious powers! What's that?

MARY. Only master blowing himself up again, ma'am.

Enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN *in a Dressing Gown, with a broken Retort in his Hand, and his Face black on one Side.*

Mr. M. How unfortunate, just at the moment I was about to prove to demonstration, in spite of Dr. Thickhead's assertion—

Mrs. M. Dear love, are you hurt? Are you in pain?

Mr. M. *(wincing)*. Pain! have I not often explained to you, my dear Mrs. Muddlebrain, how completely the philosophers have proved that there is no such thing as pain in the world—it's all imaginary. Ask John Horn there, he knows; for last week I broke his head, as an experiment, just to prove that I could not hurt him.

JOHN HORN. But you did'nt prove it. *(rubbing his head).*

Mr. M. I did John.

JOHN HORN. Then why would you not let me try the same experiment upon your head, as I wished to do?

Mr. M. Because I was already convinced.

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Mrs. M. And see there, your poor dear face, such a colour—one side is all black.

Mr. M. There you go again, my dear! You, the wife of a modern philosopher, ought to be aware that there is no such thing as colour in existence. It's an optical illusion. I've often told you, that when the rays of light, as in this instance, *(placing his left hand upon the top of his head, and the thumb of his right hand under his chin, as if to shew his face more clearly)* fall upon a dull, thick, heavy, impenetrable substance, it absorbs the light; and there being no light, it's dark.

JOHN HOHN. That's true.

Mr. M. And that's what we call black.

Mrs. M. Never mind my dear what we call it, only go and wash it off.

MARY. I'll run and fetch master some water here, ma'am.

Mrs. M. No, no, it will be better in another room. *(aside)* I *must* get them out of this apartment.

Mr. M. Mary's right—I'll have it here.

Mrs. M. How provoking.

Mr. M. And then I can explain to you the properties of water, by which—

MARY. I'll fetch it directly, sir. Come cousin, I can let you out at the same time.

SHUFFLE. I'll follow, *cousin*. *(aside to* MARY, *as they go out)* Don't forget, at seven this evening. I shall be here, in this room, and I shall not be at all insulted, if I should find a nice cold chicken, and a bottle or two of wine.

(*Exeunt* SHUFFLE and MARY.

Mrs. M. *(coming forward with* Mr. M.*)* Now, my dear, do go into another room, this you see is not yet arranged—you'll be more at home in your room.

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Mr. M. A philosopher is at home any where, I once remember, when Doctor Thickhead and I—

Mrs. M. Doctor Blockhead you mean, that's the old fool who first turned your wits about chymistry, and such nonsense? it's he makes you sit up, night after night, studying natural magic, instead of natural affection! and what does all your chymistry come to—nothing.

Mr. M. Nothing! Mrs. Muddlebrain? You're insulting! Is it nothing to be able to make a goloptious soup from oyster shells? That's done by chymistry. Is it nothing to have discovered—Oh! inestimable discovery!—a method of infusing laughing gas into our Theatres, which will be invaluable on the first night of a new Farce? That's done by chymistry! *(re-enter* MARY *with a basin, towel, soap and water, which she carries to* MUDDLEBRAIN; JOHN HORN *assists her.)* and couldn't I, by chymistry, with this basin of water and a little fire, make steam enough to blow us all to the devil; and I'll do it, if it will give you any pleasure to see the experiment. *(Washes his face,* JOHN HORN *holds the basin,* MARY *the towel and soap stand).*

MARY. La, Sir! blow us to the naughty gentleman! how you frighten one.

Mrs. M. Don't be frightened child, he can't hurt you.

Mr. M. *(washing)* Mrs. Muddlebrain, you're always throwing cold water upon my efforts; Genius, like Fortune, is a slippery jade—the soap Mary! (MARY *gives the soap and Exit.* And after enduring all the rubs and scrubs of this life, *(wiping his face)* endeavouring to get through the world with clean hands, I'm at last denied the consolation of a little connubial approbation.

Mrs. M. I wish, when you have cleaned your face, my dear, you would go and fetch your niece from school,

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it will be such a treat for her to attend the party to-morrow evening.

(Exit JOHN HORN *with basin, &c. when* MUDDLEBRAIN *has finished washing.)*

Mr. M. No my dear! Ellen never comes from boarding school until the day of her marriage; science has taught me, that girls are composed of very dangerous combustible particles, which, if brought into conjunction with a spark, are apt to go off. When I have signed the marriage contract with my friend Doctor Thickhead—

Mrs. M. Ellen marry that stupid old apothecary?

Mr. M. More respect, Mrs. M.; Doctor Thickhead is a chymist.

Mrs. M. Now I should have thought, nay wished, that my brother Frederick—

Mr. M. Frederick! that impudent young scoundrel, who laughs at my studies, and who is always fighting.

Mrs. M. He may be wiser now, for you know we have not seen him for these three years.

Mr. M. Nor will I ever see him again, if the power I have over optics can prevent it; no, no, his last act has settled him with me. What, run away, and to Liverpool too! where Ellen was then at school; and there—

Mrs. M. Mr. Muddlebrain you annoy me, I must beg you will go to your own room. *(sweetly)* Now do my dear Mr. Muddlebrain, do go.

Mr. M. *(to himself.)* What can be her reason for wishing to get rid of me?

Mrs. M. Will you go, dear?

Mr. M. No my love, I want to make a few experiments on prismatic rays of light, as the great Sir Isaac Newton did,

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thro' a little hole in the window shutter, (*pointing to window.*) and here's just the thing for me! (*going towards it, closes the shutter, in which is a small hole, holds up a prism, or bit of triangular glass.*

Mrs. M. (*agitated.*) If he should discover him! (*loud.*) Muddlebrain, I say—

Mr. M. What love? (*still admiring the glass.*)

Mrs. M. I'm out of patience with you! you're an ass; and so was Sir Isaac! (*goes off indignantly.*)

Mr. M. She called Sir Isaac an ass, I'll never forgive that; why did she want to get me out of this room? why call me so sharply from the window? There's some mystery! (*opens shutters, and looks out of window*) I see no one!

Enter JOHN HORN *cautiously.*

JOHN HORN. Master.

Mr. M. What's the matter?

JOHN HORN. Are you alone?

Mr. M. Can't you see? (*coming forward.*)

JOHN HORN. Why, to tell the truth, you have so bewildered my poor old head in trying to teach me natural magic, and to prove to me, that nothing is really as it appears to be, that I now scarcely know whether I can see or not; but if I did see what I did see, I shall most certainly open your eyes to what you won't like to see.

Mr. M. What mean you?

JOHN HORN. The young man, or something that looked to me like a young man, the very same I told you I saw under mistress's window, lives in the very next house.

Mr. M. Well.

JOHN HORN. And mistress made signs to him from the window above.

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Mr. M. Signs! but are you sure, John Horn, that it was not an optical illusion? for if the rays of light—

JOHN HORN. You know master, I have had some experience in lovers coming after one's wife; I had enough of it; for when the late Mrs. Horn—

Mr. M. Nonsense John; it's not because your wife went astray, that all the female part of creation should do the same.

Enter MARY.

MARY. Missus has just found this little strip of paper, sir; she says its a summons for you to attend a Committee at the House of Commons.

Mr. M. I've no time to attend.

MARY. Missus says you had better go directly to—

Mr. M. The Devil with you.

MARY. Dear me, sir, don't frighten me; you, being a gentleman, may go where you like, I'm only to go and get the stuffing for to morrow's dinner. Missus has a *goose*. (*Exit.*

Mr. M. Did you notice, how pointedly she said goose? She's in the plot; they want to get me away at any price.

JOHN HORN. Just as my wife used to send me, when—

Mr. M. John Horn! John Horn! I forbid you ever to mention your wife again—you'll drive me frantic. But I have it—I'll pretend to go out, and when she thinks that all is safe, I'll burst in upon her.

JOHN HORN. Just as I did, when my wife—

Mr. M. (*loudly*). John Horn!

JOHN HORN. I'm dumb, sir.

Mr. M. I wish you had a pleasanter name at this moment. Prettily I shall be laughed at; I—a disciple of Sir Humphrey—a philosopher too! I, who could see into the most hidden secrets of invisible nature—see through a mill stone

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with half an eye, to be thus blinded by a woman.—But its given me a grand idea, John Horn—I'll invent a chymical test, by which husbands may put their wives' virtue to the proof.

JOHN HORN. And if the husbands are wise, they'll never dare to use it.

Mr. M. Here she comes; the fool that I have been. Look there—it's now as clear as day; there's guilt written on her very countenance.

(Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN *Enters*).

I'll take her off her guard. (*tries to sing.*)

"O the joys of wedded life,
"O the joys of wedded life."

My joy will choke me. (*sings.*)

"Quiet mind and pretty wife,
"Makes us laugh and sing boys."

Mrs. M. You're merry, love. How lucky I should find the summons, for no one knows the trouble it might have cost you, did you not go.

Mr. M. (*aside*) I'm afraid it will cost me more if I *do* go. (*Sings.*) "Quiet mind, &c. &c." (*Aloud.*) I was not aware *my love*, that you knew any thing about the affair at *all, my dear.*

Mrs. M. Yes, and you will soon find out that I know a good deal more than you think I do; I shall surprise you soon.

Mr. M. (*aside.*) I expect you will. (*as if nothing had happened.*) But I must away. Keep up your spirits, duck! I shall not be long.

Mrs. M. No don't, dear.—Good bye.

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Mr. M. *(aside.)* The hypocritical hyena! (*to* JOHN HORN.) Did you see her smile.

HORN. I did—so like the late Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. *(Stops his mouth—going.)*

Mrs. M. *(tenderly.)* What! not a kiss.

Mr. M. I suppose I must. *(he goes reluctantly and kisses her.)*

Mrs. M. Good bye, darling.—*(retires.)*

Mr. M. (*to* JOHN HORN). *You* at this door keep an eye on her—watchful—careful—while I go round to the other.

J. HORN. As careful as I used to be of Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. Damn Mrs. Horn!

(*Exeunt* Mr. M. *and* JOHN HORN.)

Mrs. M. At last I am alone—and may with safety once again read his dear letter. How I tremble—if any one should have seen it—how imprudent: *(reads)* "Dearest Lucretia, at last then I am again near you, dear girl. How fortunate you were able to make your husband take this house! We shall now have it in our power to see, to converse freely, with each other at all times." *(to herself.)* Then it must be like Pyramus and Thisbe, through the wall! *(reads)* "When your husband shall have gone out fly to the breakfast room." *(to herself.)* This is it. *(reads)* "Two signals with your hands, and do not be afraid at any sudden apparition!—I shall appear." How I tremble—his apparition! What can he mean? And yet, in spite of my fear, I would know. Shall I?—I will. *(goes to room door and locks it.)* How my heart beats! (*she slaps her hands twice, part of the chimney piece turns round upon a centre, which brings* FREDERICK *into the room.*)

Mrs. M. Gracious powers! What have I done? (*sinks into a chair, the letter falls from her hand.*)

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FRED. (*rushing to her.*) Sister, dear sister, take courage: 'tis only I, your brother.

Mrs. M. Frederick! Oh how you frightened me. (*rising*) Was there ever anything so wonderful; how did you come?

FREDERICK. A few words will explain everything:—this house, and the one next to it, on that side, once belonged to a nest of gamblers; that fire place, which turns upon a centre, was one of their modes of escape, when surprized by the officers of justice. Having paid pretty dearly to the scoundrels, for my knowledge of their secrets, I thought I had a right to use them for my own advantage; and my having taken lodgings in the next dwelling, was the reason for my so strongly urging you in my letter, to get your husband to hire this, besides the pleasure of seeing you, dear sister, it will give me a double chance of eluding my pursuers.

Mrs. M. Are you then again in trouble?

FREDERICK. I am.

Mrs. M. Thoughtless Frederick; and at this moment too; when my husband is on the point of giving the hand of Ellen to another.

FREDERICK. Ellen, the wife of another! Never!

Mrs. M. I can scarcely pity you. Why will you ever be quarrelling,—ever be fighting?

FREDERICK. On my honour, dear sister, you wrong me;—it is true, I have had some words with the unfortunate young man who was found shot; but how he came so, I am perfectly ignorant. I require time to prove my innocence; and as I thought I could employ that time to more advantage, out of a prison than in one, I fled from Liverpool, arrived safely in London, and of the rest you are already aware. All I now want is a friend, to wait upon the secretary of state, to shew him the papers I bear about me, and speak warmly in my favour. Are you sure your husband—

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Mrs. M. Sure! if he but knew you were here, he would be the first to disclose your retreat, so incensed is he against you. But I have a thought—I—yes; I will do it myself.

FREDERICK. You, sister!

Mrs. M. Yes, I. My friend Lady Manville, is first cousin to this very secretary of state; I will hasten to her; my husband is out; give me the papers; not a moment must be lost; and remember, do not stir until you hear the signal.

JOHN HORN. (*without.*) Here, madam!

Mrs. M. Some one comes—quick—quick.

FREDERICK. I am gone! (*places himself against the chimney, touches the spring, and disappears. At the same moment,* JOHN HORN *from without, is trying to open the left hand door.*)

JOHN HORN. Here, madam!

Mrs. M. Well? (*unlocks door.*)

JOHN HORN. Didn't you call, ma'am? (*entering.*)

Mrs. M. No.

JOHN HORN. Strange! I thought I heard—just as I once did in the time of the late Mrs. Horn.

Mrs. M. No more, John.

JOHN HORN. I'm dumb. But please you ma'am, we are to prepare the dinner in this apartment; the dining room being so choked up with furniture.

Mrs. M. As you please.

MARY. (*from without.*) Mr. Horn, come and assist me with this table.

JOHN HORN. I'm coming mistress Mary, I'm coming. (*While* Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN *is speaking,* JOHN HORN *and* MARY *bring in a tray, on which is a cold fowl, a loin, some wine, &c. and three candles unlighted, one a small one, put it on table.*)

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Mrs. M. They certainly suspect nothing! (*looking at her watch.*) only five o'clock, and already getting dark. What, if I should not return before my husband. Here, Mary!

MARY. Yes, ma'am. (*coming down.*)

Mrs. M. I am compelled to go out, Mary; so if Mr. Muddlebrain should come home first, and ask for me, you will tell him that I am dressing. You understand, Mary?—Dressing.

JOHN HORN. (*aside, placing things on table.*) And mind she doesn't get a good dressing. (*Exit* Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN.

MARY. Yes ma'am, I understand. Mum! (*aside.*) It's all right, I shall soon be able to tell about Shuffle, and my marriage. (*Exit.*

JOHN HORN. There they go, whispering to each other; it's as clear as day! Poor Mr. Muddlebrain!

Mr. M. (*puts his head in at the door.*) John.

JOHN HORN. (*not hearing.*) He'll not be long without a—

Mr. M. Horn, I say.

JOHN HORN. Is that you, master?

Mr. M. Do you know John, I begin to think we are wrong; because it's impossible that my wife—a wife that adores me.

JOHN HORN. Ah, sir, the late Mrs. Horn adored me! But sir, I have proofs.

Mr. M. Proofs! (*starts.*)

JOHN HORN. Yes, do you know that the young gentleman has not appeared once at the window since you have been out.

Mr. M. Well, but that's a good sign.

JOHN HORN. Yes; but as I came up stairs I heard the voice of a man. Is that a good sign?

Mr. M. No, a damn'd bad one! A man's voice?

JOHN HORN. Talking to missus.

Mr. M. I'm in a cold sweat! but John, don't you know

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that science has taught us, the organ called the ear is very deceptive; that when the mind is fixed intently upon one point, sounds are often heard at another.

JOHN HORN. But I thought I heard a kiss.

Mr. M. A kiss?

JOHN HORN. Just such as I once heard in the time of Mrs.—

Mr. M. I'll choke you; and what did you do?

JOHN HORN. I opened the door—no, I tried to open it; for it was locked!

Mr. M. Locked?

JOHN HORN. Yes. But she let me in; and madame was—

Mr. M. Well!

JOHN HORN. Alone.

Mr. M. Fool! ideot! Just as I was in a state of almost spontaneous combustion! Now will you believe in my theory, which proves that everything is nothing; and that nothing is the only real thing in the world.

JOHN HORN. (*picking up the note let fall by* Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN.) Then perhaps this little bit of paper is nothing, for it looks wonderfully like a real note.

Mr. M. A note!

JOHN HORN. Yes, and I declare, addressed to missus.

Mr. M. (*taking the note from* JOHN HORN.) To your mistress? What do I see? (*reads*) "Dearest Lucretia," that's my wife! "at last then I am again near you, dear girl." Damnation! (*reading, with great agitation*) "Have it in our power at all times—husband out—two signals"—

JOHN HORN. Am I a fool now?

Mr. M. No John, but I am. What shall I do? a fire damp has exploded in my brain; I'm in a perfect state of fusion. Fetch me a bag of nitrous oxide.

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JOHN HORN. Yes, sir.

Mr. M. No, some brandy—water—anything.

JOHN HORN. Yes, sir!

Mr. M. No, John; fetch me nothing.

JOHN HORN. I will, sir.

Mr. M. The perfidious wretch! Light the candles John. (JOHN HORN *takes an apparatus off the shelf, and lights the candles.)* Now I no longer wonder at her speaking in such praise of this apartment. (*imitates his wife*) "This shall be my apartment; 'twill just do for me." (*naturally*). And will do for me, I'm afraid. (*like his wife*). "Two entrances, how convenient."—No doubt she has found it so. (*looks at note*). "Again near you!" (*to* JOHN HORN) Perhaps he's near us; take a light John, we'll search the house.—Where shall we begin?

JOHN HORN. I used to begin at the dust hole.

Mr. M. You go that way, I'll take this; and if we find a lover——

JOHN HORN. I once found two! (*aside.*)

Mr. M. Ye powers that guard over injured husbands nerve my arm to vengeance! (*Exeunt* Mr. M. *and* JOHN HORN, *each taking a light.)*

SHUFFLE *descends the Chimney, and advances with caution.*

SHUFFLE. It was not for nothing that I, Harry Shuffle, performed the parts of head waiter, croupier, cutter, shuffler, and all that, when this was a gambling house. To look at that chimney, few people would imagine the inside was built like a staircase—many a time have I scampered up that when the Bow-street officers, those cursed knaves of clubs, were at our heels. I've cut the cards now, and deal in other commodities,

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I'm head man at a pop shop, as I call it, not a pawnbroker's but a gunsmith's—by the bye, I have forgotten to take home this brace of pistols (*feeling his back pocket*)—never mind. Now let me see: that's Mary's room, and (*turning round sees table*) the dear little queen of hearts! She has not forgotten my hint about the fowl, and the two bottles of wine. Doubtless the family are in the dining room; so I may safely enjoy the banquet my dear little Mary has prepared for me. (*sits down at the table.*)

Re-enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN *without the Candle.*

Mr. M. Nobody to be found; no, one has left the house! (*sees* SHUFFLE) The devil! Here he is, and eating my dinner! Shall I knock him down!

SHUFFLE. How heavy these pistols are in my pocket. (*puts pistols on table, pointing towards* Mr. M.)

Mr. M. Is he going to murder us.

SHUFFLE. What, if I'd shot myself!

Mr. M. I wish you had.

SHUFFLE. Now, Mr. Shuffle, I'll cut you for a slice of ham. (*cuts a slice, and holds it on his fork.*) It's mine! I've won it. (*eats.*)

Mr. M. And I've lost it! What's he at?

SHUFFLE. Now, Mr. Shuffle, I'll toss you for a glass of wine—I've won it! (*drinks.*)

Mr. M. And I'll toss you out of the window.

SHUFFLE. What's that? (*puts wine glass on candle, and extinguishes it.*)

Enter MARY.

MARY. I thought I heard master's voice.

Mr. M. A female! that's my wife!

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SHUFFLE. There's some one in the room.

MARY. Perhaps it's my husband.

Mr. M. It is indeed.

MARY. Henry!

SHUFFLE. Yes, love!

Mr. M. (*softly.*) "Love," too; a pleasant situation mine. (*locks one of the doors.*) Cockatrice! wretch! If I can find my way to the door. (*feels for door on the other side.*) I'll lock them in until I have procured witnesses; and then for a divorce. (*Exit.*

MARY. I thought master was here.

SHUFFLE. So he is; your lord and master.

MARY. But how got you here?

SHUFFLE. I flew here; but first my dear little wife, let me give you a kiss as a recompence for the fine fat fowl I've enjoyed.

MARY. What fowl?

SHUFFLE. Why the fowl you left for me on the table here, which I can assure you was delicious.

MARY. Oh! horror! you havn't eaten it?

SHUFFLE. All but the bones.

MARY. We're ruined and undone! Why that was the cold dinner for master and missus.

SHUFFLE. The devil!

MARY. And listen! Here is master coming, what shall I do?

SHUFFLE. Don't be afraid, like an old witch, I'll be up the chimney in a crack.

MARY. I shall faint!

SHUFFLE. That's your affair, I'm off! (*the door is heard opening.*)

MARY. (*falls in a chair.*) I'm gone!

SHUFFLE. So am I. (*gets up the chimney*)

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Enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN *with a Brace of Pistols, and* JOHN HORN *with a Blunderbuss and a lighted Candle.*

Mr. M. Now, vile seducer! surrender, or we'll shoot you!

JOHN HORN. This reminds me of old times.

Mr. M. Where is he, John?

JOHN HORN. I don't see anybody.

(*Goes to table, and lights the other candle.*

Mr. M. No matter;—here's the companion of his guilt. (*seeing* MARY), Rise, lost, abandoned woman, and leave my house.

MARY. Abandoned. (*Starts up*).

Mr. M. and JOHN HORN. (*together*). Mary!

MARY. Yes, and I'd have you to know, I'm no more *abandoned* than my betters. This is my husband. (*looks around*), Gone!

Mr. M. Who's your husband?

MARY. I did'nt say husband.

Mr. M. If not; who was it I saw eating my dinner?

MARY. I—as nobody seemed inclined to eat it, I thought *I might*.

Mr. M. Well, if it were you, you must be very quick at your toilet; for just now I'm certain you had on a pair of breeches and jockey boots.

MARY. I! You know, sir, that as you say, nothing is really in this world as it seems to be, I date say I did appear to *you* in jockey boots; but it was merely an *hoptical* illusion as you philosophers call it.

Mr. M. Where then is my wife?

MARY. Sir?

JOHN HORN. Can you understand a simple question?—Where is this gentleman's wife? (*Retires towards window.*

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MARY. His wife! She's dressing.

Mr. M. Dressing;—is she?

JOHN HORN. Then she's dressing in the street; for by the gas-light yonder, I see her at this moment getting out of a hackney coach.

Mr. M. By herself?

JOHN HORN. No; by the pump.

MARY. May I go, sir?

Mr. M. Yes; to your own room, sphynx, (*takes out key and opens door*) but do not dare to breathe until I call you, or you shall die!

MARY. I shall die if I don't breathe! Indeed, sir; I——

Mr. M. In, directly; or——

MARY. Oh dear! What can all this mean? (Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN *pushes her into a room, and locks the door.*)

Mr. M. We have one of the accomplices safe; now for the principals. Where can the vile seducer be? Has he vanished in smoke?

JOHN HORN. Hush, master! I hear missus coming.

Mr. M. Then you descend by the little staircase: call in all my neighbours—every body you see in the street. I wish all London to behold my wrongs! To witness my great revenge! My triumph! Quick, away.

JOHN HORN. I fly. (*Exit.*

Mr. M. Now where to hide myself, that I may surprise them. I have it: in the nook of this chimney. Here can I watch the crocodile. Hush! (*conceals himself.*)

Enter Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN *cautiously.*

Mrs. M. Nobody here! How fortunate I should find my spouse out.

Mr. M. Ditto.

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Mrs. M. Now then to summon my dear Frederick.

Mr. M. Just now it was Henry!

Mrs. M. What a pity it is my husband is so prejudiced; I should like to tell him all about it.

Mr. M. The devil you would!

Mrs. M. For if we could all three live together; it would be so pleasant.

Mr. M. Damn'd pleasant! I can't stand this.

Mr. M. Perhaps my husband will be more reconciled in time, and then—

Mr. M. (*Groans.*)

Mrs. M. What was that? Was it Frederick? Quick, the signal. (*she slaps her hands rather softly, and listens*). No reply; he could not have heard me.

Mr. M. But he shall hear *me*. (*gives two loud slaps with his hands, when the chimney instantly springs round, carrying with it* Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN, *and bringing* FREDERICK *into view.*) Abduction!

Mrs. M. What was that? I shall swoon.

FREDERICK. (*running to her*). Do not fear, dear sister.

Mrs. M. But I heard some one calling.

FREDERICK. Doubtless; when the chimney was opened, you must have heard the officers trying to break open the door of my apartment.

Mrs. M. Officers! have they then discovered your retreat?

FREDERICK. They have; but I'll give them leave to arrest any body they may find in my room. But what news sister?

Mrs. M. Why you must know, I went to my old friend Lady Manville, when, what was my surprise?—

Mr M. (*without*). Reparation! Reparation! What reparation can I have? Answer me that.

Mrs. M. Ye powers, my husband!

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FREDERICK. Again! I've not time for the chimney. (*slips under the table*).

Enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN *in great disorder;* THREE OFFICERS *following*.

Mrs. M. What does all this mean?

Mr. M. What does it mean? who can tell what it means? Here was I, one moment in this room; and in another, by the force of magic, or old Nick, I've been rammed through a stone wall, into the iron clutches of these *civil* officers, as they are called.

Enter JOHN HORN.

JOHN HORN. They're below sir; I've brought all I could find, to witness your triumph.

Mr. M. A pretty triumph! (*to the* OFFICER). Now, sir, of what am I accused?

OFFICER. Of killing a young man in a duel.

Mr. M. I fight a duel!

OFFICER. Yes; they tell me it was a most bloody contest, and but for your wonderful bravery——

Mrs. M. Indeed, sir, he is not capable of such a thing.

JOHN HORN. No, indeed he's not, sir.

Mr. M. No sir, I'm incapable of any thing; I'm a gentleman, sir. This is my house.

OFFICER. Then why did we find you in the next one? How got you there?

Mr. M. Through the wall.

OFFICER. Ridiculous! Your name is Frederick Melville; we know you.

Mr. M. No, sir. My name, I'm not ashamed of it, is Muddlebrain—Joseph Muddlebrain.

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OFFICER. The devil it is! Then, if you are a quiet gentleman, why do we find you armed with these crackers? (*taking pistols from table.*)

Mr. M. Because I have been watching and searching for a lover my wife has hid somewhere.

ALL. A lover!

Mrs. M. Mr. Muddlebrain, do you dare to——

Mr. M. Yes, ma'am; I here unmask you to the world.

Mrs. M. Listen to me, sir.

Mr. M. I'll hear nothing! (*To the* OFFICER) I was standing just here, (*goes to chimney*) upon the watch, when, all at once——

SHUFFLE. (*is heard calling in the chimney.*) I'm down by jingo! (*Two or three bricks fall down upon* Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN, *who runs forward.*)

Mr. M. Murder! (SHUFFLE's *legs are dangling down for a minute; and* ALL *are astonished.*) That's he! I know him by his boots. That's her paramour! He first broke my peace, and has now broken my head. Seize him! (*Two Followers seize* SHUFFLE, *and bring him forward.*)

SHUFFLE. Pardon, gentlemen, I'm no paramour, but an honest young man.

OFFICER. How came you in that chimney?

SHUFFLE. Why, as I was going along, I heard the cry of fire; so thinking it was in the chimney—I—I—I—fell down it; and here I am.

Mr. M. So villain, you were walking along the street, and fell down a chimney. A pretty story, indeed.

MARY. (*heard knocking from within.*) Let me out, let me out! (JOHN HORN *unlocks the door,* MARY *enters.*)

OFFICER. (*to his men*). March him off.

MARY. (*crying*). Oh ma'am! oh master! Pray pardon!

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Do, good Mr. Officer! he only came to see me; he's an honest young man, and my husband.

ALL. Your husband!

Mr. M. What do I hear? say it once more.

MARY. He's my husband.

Mr. M. Come to my arms, you little darling. (*hugs her*). Oh! my good friends! oh! my dear little wife! and you, John Horn, I don't mind your name now, bear witness, that I'm the happiest man,—that is, *married* man in the world.

JOHN HORN (*who has been looking at the table*). Not yet, sir.

Mr. M. What do you mean, Horn?

JOHN HORN. (*whispering to* MR. MUDDLEBRAIN, *and pointing at the table.*) Here's another, I see his legs.

Mr. M. Nonsense; they are the legs of the table.

JOHN HORN. If they are, they wear boots. (*at this moment,* MARY and SHUFFLE, *who have been taking away the dinner things, also take away the cloth, and discover* FREDERICK *sitting under the table*).

FREDERICK. (*laughing*). Don't be afraid! 'tis only I.

ALL. A young man!

Mrs. M. Brother!

Mr. M. Frederick Melville!

OFFICER. The very man we are to arrest.

Mrs. M. This paper will satisfy you that he is at liberty. (*Gives paper to* OFFICER, *who goes off with his followers.*)

FREDERICK. Is it possible!

Mr. M. John Horn! John Horn! You've made me an ass. (*to his Wife.*) Most celestial of terrestrial beings, can you forgive me?

Mrs. M. On one condition.

Mr. M. Name it.

Mrs. M. That Frederick marry your niece Ellen.

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Mr. M. Well, as he deserves to be punished in some way, perhaps that will be as good a method as any.—Eh! John Horn?

JOHN HORN. Can't be better—*I've* been married.

Mr. M. And you've been an old fool, I hope you will allow that.

JOHN HORN. I don't know. (*confidentially*) There may be a third lover somewhere, as there was in the time of the late Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. Poh! Let there be, I fear him not. (*taking* Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN'S *hand*) And I hope the structure of our chimney piece, supported by Mr. and Mrs. Muddlebrain, with a little Cupid at top, will be considered both useful (*pointing to* Mrs. MUDDLEBRAIN) and ornamental.

CURTAIN.

W. GLINDON, PRINTER, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

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9

HIGH, LOW, JACK & THE GAME;

OR,

The Card Party.

A MOST EXTRAVAGANT EXTRAVAGANZA,

OR

RUM-ANTICK BURLETTA,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

J. R. PLANCHÉ,

AND

CHARLES DANCE,

AUTHORS OF "OLYMPIC REVELS," &c.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL OLYMPIC,

Monday, September 30, 1830,

"Speak by the *card*."—SHAKSPEARE.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

(Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

1833.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE great success which has attended the previous Burlesque Burlettas at this Theatre, by the same Authors, has induced them to submit the whole of the present one to the Public, in a printed form, at the same price as, and in lieu of, *the Songs only*, as heretofore. It is intended, now that efficient protection is afforded by the late Act, to follow up this by the publication of the Classical Burlesque Burlettas, called "Olympic Revels," "Olympic Devils," and "The Paphian Bower;" which will appear in quick succession.

The Authors take this first opportunity of expressing their sincere gratitude to the Public for the encouragement accorded to their humble endeavours to increase the harmless stock of public amusement, and to congratulate themselves, in the words of "The Merry Monarch,"

"That their nonsense suits *their* nonsense."

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PLAYING CARDS.

The King of Spades, *(flushed with victory over the King of Hearts)*	Mr. Matthews.
The Queen of Spades	Miss Fitzwalter.
His Honour the Lord Ace Chancellor	Mr. Tully.
His Grace the Deuce, *(Lord Little Cassino to His Majesty)*	Miss Pettifer.
The Knave of Spades, *(Captain of the Life Cards,* black)	Mr. Wyman.
His Eminence the Ten of Diamonds, (Cardinal *Legate from Pope Joan, Lord Great Cassino to the King of Diamonds, and Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Spades)*	Mr. Mason.
The King of Clubs, *(a Knight of the Round Table)*	Mr. J. Bland.
Pam, *(his Squire)*	Mr. Collier.
Ombre of the King of Hearts, *(fallen in combat against the King of Spades)*	Mr. Huggins.
The Queen of Hearts, *(a Captive-ating Captive)*	Madame Vestris.
The Knave of Hearts, *(Ex-Valet to the late King)*	Mr. Salter.

Common Cards of the various Suits—Messrs. Ireland, Hitchinson, Fry, Morgan, Dowsing, and Giffin; Mesdames Crawford, Norman, Greener, Harrington, Nicholson, Melbourne, Goward, Tully.

The Music selected from the BEST HANDS, and arranged by Mr. Blewitt.

The New SUITS, by Mr. Jefkins, Miss Ireland, and Partners, from original Paintings, in the possession of every body.

A DEAL of Machinery, by Mr. Mackintosh. The Properties MADE and CUT by Mr. Buckley.

The New Scenery (painted by Mr. Gordon) will be DEALT OUT in the following order:—

1. A WELL-KNOWN EXTERIOR.
2. *The COURT CARD ROOM of the KING OF SPADES.*
3. CHAMBER IN SPADE PALACE.
4. THE DUNGEON OF CARD CASTLE.
5. *Exterior of Card Castle.*
6. As be 4.
7. COURT YARD OF THE CASTLE.

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HIGH, LOW, JACK, &c.

As the Overture commences the Curtain draws and discovers—

SCENE I.

A well-known Exterior.

(i. e.) The portrait of the Great Mogul, as seen on the cover of a new pack of cards.

At the conclusion of the Overture, a crash is heard, and the scene parting, as if torn asunder, discovers—

SCENE II.

The Court Card Room of the King of Spades.

The KING *and* QUEEN OF SPADES *are seated on their thrones. His honour the* ACE *on the right of the* KING, *and his grace the* DEUCE *on the left of the* QUEEN. *The rest of the suit are arranged on each side of the throne, and captive Hearts, of both sexes, kneeling before it, under the guard of the Knave of Spades. Grand flourish. At a sign from the* KING, *the* DEUCE *advances to the orchestra.*

DEUCE, (*pointing with his wand to the leader,*) It's your lead—play!

GLEE & CHORUS.

(" *The mighty conqueror of hearts.*")

The mighty Conqueror of Hearts in triumph here behold!
With all his trumps, we sound his fame, our champion stout and bold!
While honours count for victory, ye Spades, in chorus sing,
" A lucky job it was for us we turned up such a King!"

KING OF SP. Thanks, my brave Pips! my noble black cards, thanks!
We like this adulation! Praise is nought

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Unless 'tis laid on with a trowel! we
Are king "de jure" and "de facto," and we say
Play the whole game or nothing!

QUEEN OF SP. Yet my liege— (*rising*)

KING OF SP. Silence!

QUEEN OF SP. I'm dumb. (*sits down*)

KING OF SP. Not you, sweet partner; to the court I spoke.
Proceed, and without further interruption.

QUEEN OF SP. Well, then, my liege, I was about to say (*rising again*)
I thought—

KING OF SP. We differ from you totally,
And so sit down. My lords! court cards and common,
You have just now, and justly, sung our praises.
We scorn to laud ourselves; but we are sworn
To speak the truth. We are the greatest monarch
Upon the cards. Be quiet; for we know it.
In evil hour for him, the King of Hearts
Affronted us. On the green cloth of battle
Soon hand to hand we met. But our hand proved
Too strong for his—a pretty hand he made on't—
For with our own great spade to bed we put him,
And left him playing dumby.

DEUCE. Glorious game!
These red men thought to make us blackies slaves.
You taught them, Sire, a trick worth two of that—

KING OF SP. Silence! we would we could induce the deuce
To hold his tongue—deuce take him! As we said,
The King of Hearts is playing dumby. But
Not so his captive queen—she talks of liberty,
And talks incessantly, as Queens and women,
Captive or not, are but too prone to do.
Has she a motive for so talking? Silence—

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We thank your forwardness, but we can answer,
Good people, for ourself. Has she a motive?
We have a shrewd suspicion—we say nothing—
The King of Diamonds is a widower;
The Queen of Hearts good-looking—we had almost said—
Confoundedly good-looking—we say nothing.

DEUCE *aside.* Methinks his *Majesty* talks much for one
Who constantly says nothing.

KING OF SP. Silence! I say 'tis just upon the cards
That this same King may offer her his hand—
Should he prefer his suit— (*Flourish without.*)
Did we say trumpet?

(*The* KNAVE OF SPADES *goes out, and returns with a card.*)

KNAVE OF SP. My liege, a card.

KING OF SP. The Ten of Diamonds!

KNAVE OF SP. The cardinal, lord great Cassino to
And envoy from his Majesty *his* king

KING OF SP. Aha! my pips! I ask you, is your Sovereign
A good hand at a guess or not? No answer!
Turn up the Ten of Diamonds.

(*Enter* TEN OF DIAMONDS.)

KING OF SP. Welcome, Lord Cardinal! What says our Cousin
His precious Majesty of Diamonds?

TEN OF D. Diamonds sends health to Spades, and greets him thus:—
The Queen of Hearts—poor heart—a captive maid,
Or rather made a captive by thy arms,
Here languishes in prison.

KING OF SP. Wonderful!
Hast thou no news, my lord? All this we know,
We took that trick ourself!

DEUCE. 'Twas an odd trick.

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KING OF SP. Aha!

DEUCE. Because it won the game.

KING OF SP. Oho! Proceed.

TEN. Her Majesty of Hearts—

KING OF SP. Silence!

TEN. Alack! how can I tell my tale,
Great Spade, and yet be silent too?

KING OF SP. That's true—
But cut thy tale short, and let's have the heads.
Proceed from "languishes in prison,"—we
Have heard the rest before.

TEN. In prison, and
The king, *my* king, desires her instant freedom.

KING OF SP. Desires!

TEN. Entreats!

KING OF SP. That's better. We'll consult
His honour here, the Ace. Lord Chancellor,
You hear the King of Diamonds doth propose
To take the Queen of Hearts, and in exchange
To give us—nothing. The advantage thus,
Being all upon one side, 'twere crooked policy,
Methinks, to grant this boon. But how say you?

ACE. I doubt—I'll take the papers home and look at them
Ere I give judgment in this card case.

KING OF SP. Pshaw!
Doubt me no doubts! Chief Justice Hoyle hath ruled,
When in doubt win the trick. We do refuse—

TEN. My answer is then?—

KING OF SP. Flat denial; unless
He offer every diamond in the pack
By way of ransom! Go, inform our cousin
We'll see him—he knows what first. For yourself,

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Your stick is in your hand, sir—cut it.

TEN. Ah! this to me! Remember, haughty Spade,
Pope Joan is our near kinswoman! There's but
One pip between us and her Holiness!
Beware of excommunication! There's
A bull—

KING OF SP. A bull! we'll take it by the horns.
The Pope! Poh, poh!
Thou canst not, Cardinal, in all the cards
Find one so slight and so ridiculous
To charge me with an answer as the Pope.
Go tell her so. She'll find that in her game
The King of Spades's a stop! Despising too
You and your Master—thus we turn our back—
You'll find our answer plain!—

(*The King and court turn their backs upon the Cardinal.*)

Break up the court— (*Exit Cardinal.*)
We're for the chase! Go order Hunt and Son
To let our pack out. Whatsoe'er the game,
Be sure you follow suit!

AIR AND CHORUS.—DER FREISCHUTZ.

("*Hark! follow; hark!*")

KING.

Away, hie away to the table's green cover;
Ourself will be poney and make up the pack:
The hounds shall play points, and when land games are over,
There's fish in the pool, and we'll turn up a Jack.
Let Jew money-lenders play "Beggar my neighbour;"
Let merchants play "Commerce," and soldiers "Piquet;"
At vain "Speculation" philosophers labour;
We're for "Whist"—and our crown on the rubber we'll bet.

CHORUS.

Then, Cards, follow suit, follow suit, follow suit, &c.

(*Exeunt Omnes.*)

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SCENE III.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter the KNAVE OF HEARTS.

KNAVE OF H. So far my game goes well. The King of Hearts
Is slain—his suit dispersed—his queen a captive;
All, all through me! 'Twas I finessed the Tyrant,
I overlooked his hand, and told the foe
Exactly what he held. O, sweet revenge!
What! For I eat a paltry score of tarts
Made on a summer-day by his fair queen,
Must I be scorned, discarded, rhymes made on me
And set to filthy tunes? Forbid it, fate!
No, no; I'll not be call'd a knave for nothing.
Vengeance is fed crop-full; but Love! ah, Love!
Almighty Love is yet unsatisfied.
I'm sore perplexed. The Queen of Spades' blue eyes
Have driven the black ones of the Queen of Hearts
Almost from out my nob; I must win both.
Intrigue and Matrimony! By Pope Joan!
The Knave—the poor despised Knave—will be
Within an ace of clearing all the board.

AIR—KNAVE OF HEARTS.
(*The Minstrel Boy.*)

The King of Spades to the chace is gone,
In the midst of the pack you'll find him;
He leads his suit to the black game on,
But his Queen he has left behind him:
An honour she is called to his throne,
And she bears like a saint her slavery;
But, like the rest of her sex, I own
She deals on a bit of knavery.

(Exit Knave.)

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SCENE IV.

A Prison.

The QUEEN OF HEARTS *is discovered, attended by four of her Ladies-Maids of Honour, one of whom, kneeling, holds before her a miniature of the King, her late husband, (a playing-card in a case.)*

QUEEN, (*advancing to the air of "Portrait charmant,"*)

Yes, thou sweet image of my sainted lord,
By day I hold thee ever in my hand:
Night comes, and finds thee laid out in my crib!
Well I remember, I was sweet fifteen,
And you were fifteen too; (ah, what a pair!
Made for each other;) when your first fond suit
Brought a wild flush into my maiden cheeks,
Which counted, made you out. For years I wore thee
"Here, in my heart of hearts." For years we pegg'd
At the same board together. Oh, my husband,
Now thou hast shuffled off thy mortal coil,
I have no heart to cut for partners more!

(*Enter the* KNAVE OF HEARTS.)

Ha! Can I trust my sight? Avaunt, base Knave—
Ruffian—Rascallion—Rebel—Regicide—
Thief—Coward—Jackanapes—and Jack-a-dandy.
In short—thou every thing but gentleman.

KNAVE OF H. In short! That's personal; marry come up,
Shorts are the fashion; and Bob Short is called
A high authority! "In short" forsooth!
Short-sighted lady, I'll be short with you:
I love you, and would take you for my bride.

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QUEEN OF H. Take me! *you* take the Queen! you cannot do it:

I am a cut above you, sir, and sooner
Than I'd take you, and make myself the Jil of such a Jack,
I'd take the meanest spade, and dig my grave with it.

KNAVE OF H. Indignant Queen—

QUEEN OF H. Impudent Knave! talkest thou of love to me?

KNAVE OF H. Alack, Madame!

AIR.—KNAVE.

("*Is there a heart.*")

Is there a heart that never loved?
If so, it is not mine:
Is there a Knave can mark unmoved
A point that should be thine?
Oh, bear him to some distant shores,
Or shabby "silver hell,"
Where monsters only play "All Fours,"
Where honours never tell.

QUEEN OF H. Honours! I never reckoned upon thine, be sure!

KNAVE OF H. Hear me in prose my ardent passion tell.

QUEEN OF H. Thy passion! thine! begone, or thou shalt find

Thy passion, saucy Knave, a joke to mine!

KNAVE OF H. Madam, I go. How's this! (*aside*) the King of Spades!

So, so; fair Queen, *you* are his game to-day;
To mark the King, I'll play at ecarté.

(*Conceals himself.*)

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Enter the KING OF SPADES.

KING OF SP. How fares our fairest prisoner of war?

QUEEN OF H. With the humility which best befits
Our sad condition, briefly we reply,
We're none the better, sir, for seeing you.

KING OF SP. Most captivating captive, we in turn
Do wear *your* chains; so we have cut the pack,
And slipped away to pay our duty here:
See at thy feet a spade— (*kneeling.*)

QUEEN OF H. A rake you mean.

KING OF SP. Well, be it so; thou art the mould of form!
And I propose—

QUEEN OF H. And I refuse—

KING OF SP. Hard heart!
Before thou knowest what.

QUEEN OF H. I know what's what, and therefore do refuse

AIR.—QUEEN.

("*My heart with love is beating.*")

When spades our hearts were beating,
And doubling them all down,
I felt it was by cheating
My husband lost a crown.
Fair play could ne'er have done it,
For, when our colour fled,
E'en you yourself must own it,
The run was on the red.

KING OF SP. Never! Beware the sequence; you have ruffed me
When leading from my weakest suit; but now
I'll change it Queen, and play a forward game! (*seizing her.*)

QUEEN OF H. I'll call a card. Help! help!

(KNAVE OF HEARTS, *who has slipped out, returns with the* QUEEN OF SPADES.)

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KING OF S. The Knave of Hearts! my wife too! I've misdealt,
And lost the game by it.

QUEEN OF SP. So, sir, I've caught you.
What! fling down your own hand, and take up *Miss*
Before my face!

KING OF SP. It was amiss, I own; but I repent,
And ask my partner, can you one—forgive?

QUEEN OF SP. Your partner scorns to answer; you have scored
A point that honours do not count at.

KING OF SP. Nay,
That's nine, you know, and we are but at sixes
And sevens; all may yet be well.

QUEEN OF SP. Away!

KING OF SP. Slight of hand! I'll not bear this!
Spades are still trumps, and I of spades am King,
And the last player too; the trick is mine:
So, madam, as you choose to say we're nine,
I'm out by cards. What, ho! there! take 'em up;
I'll make a brulé of 'em all!

(*The Ghost of the* KING OF HEARTS *appears.*)

KING OF SP. (*starting.*) Mother-o'-pearl! What carte-blanche have we here?

GHOST. I am the Ombre of the King of Hearts.

QUEEN OF HEARTS. My husband!

KNAVE OF HEARTS. My late king.

KING OF SP. Avaunt, and quit my sight—let the earth hide thee!
There is no speculation in those eyes
That thou dost glare withal!

GHOST. I do not play
At speculation.

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KN. OF HRTS. (*aside.*) No; he plays at fright.
KING OF SP. What game is now a foot?
GHOST. Whist! whist! oh whist!
KING OF SP. Whence comest thou?
GHOST. From a—hem!
A Pandemonium—a shocking place
At the court-end o' the town.
KING OF SP. And what thine errand?
GHOST. I have come to warn you;
You have revoked—
KING OF SP. Poh, poh!
GHOST. I say you have.
A heart was led; and when you trumped this trick
My Queen was in your hand.
KING OF SP I care not. I—I'll not give up a point.
GHOST. Then D. I. O.
QU. of HRTS. Oh! Say before you go
Two words of comfort to your wretched wife.
GHOST. Red wins. (*The ghost disappears.*)
QUEEN OF H. Ah tyrant! hearest thou that? red wins!
KING of SP. Red wins! red shall not win—that ghost shall lie
In the Red Sea!—What, Ho! My guards here!—
Without there!

CONCERTED PIECE.—PIANO PIANISSIMO.

(*From the "Barber of Seville."*)

KNAVE OF HEARTS, QUEEN OF HEARTS, AND QUEEN OF SPADES.

Piano! Pianissimo:—Keep within bounds,
For such high airs you have no grounds.

ALL BUT KING.

Of the sequence pray take heed, Sir,
Such vile play can ne'er succeed, Sir!
Fate will soon return your lead, Sir—

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Conscience wont be mute!—
And you'll rue the day, indeed, Sir,
You refused your partner's suit!

KING.

Silence! Silence! Cease your bawling:
By the heels I'll lay you sprawling;
For a new deal Vengeance calling
Makes me deaf to Pity's suit.

SCENE V.

Exterior of Card-Castle.

March in Blue Beard.—Enter the KING OF CLUBS *and* PAM.

KING OF C. Behold the King of Clubs! who has become
An errant knight for the sweet Queen of Hearts;
And Pam, an arrant knave, who leads him on
With idle hopes unlimited, in lieu
Of dealing reason out with friendly hand.

PAM. To deal out reason to a lover is
To lose a deal of time. Odd's fish and counters!
I've served too many knights at the round table
Not to know that, my master!

KING OF C. Pam, be civil,
And tell me if thou seest a card house near
That may contain my love.

PAM. Your most majestic Majesty of Clubs
Has but to follow your own nose three steps,
And you may ring it soundly at the gate
Of a fair castle.

KING OF C. Hah! my grief's so great
It blinds me! As thou sayest, there is a castle—

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And built with cards! my sympathetic soul
Tells me that here my love in limbo lies.
E'en while her husband lived, across the board
Oft have her black eyes on my blue beard cast
Their whistful glances. Hah! I know the play
Will fetch her out. From Blue-Beard I will pull
The finest air. Come forth, my dulcet lute,
And you, my sharp set squire, a while be mute,
While I, with lowly suit and plaintive ditty,
Attempt to move this gentle heart to pity!

AIR.—KING OF CLUBS.

("*Twilight glimmers,*" *&c.*—BLUE BEARD.)

Sky-light open, and play bo-peep,
Lady love—Lady love—never fear
Wall to climb and ditch to leap,
Lady love—Lady love—See limbs here!

The QUEEN OF HEARTS *appears on the battlements.*

QUEEN OF H. What airy sound floats o'er the area rails,
And to the high top garret of my tower
Adds a new story, built by hope and joy?
I've heard *that air* before—I'll try *this here*:—

AIR.—QUEEN OF HEARTS.

("*Tink a tink.*"—BLUE BEARD.)

Here sighing, sick dying, sorrow hanging over me,
Faint, weary, sad, dreary, I in prison lie!
My moaning, deep groaning, surely must discover me
To some kind gentleman who may be passing by.
Clink! clink a clink a clink; I clank my chains in madness:
Tink! tink a tink a tink, and in despair I sing:
Wink! wink a wink a wink; I cannot sleep for sadness.
Tink! tink a tink a tink; while thus my hands I wring.

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TOGETHER.

QUEEN OF H. Tink! tink a tink tink; indeed I'm very melancholy:
Tink! tink a tink tink; though thus I dance and sing.

KING OF C. AND PAM { Tink! tink a tink tink; indeed she's very melancholy:
Tink! tink a tink; of her woes { I've / he's } touched the string.

KING OF C. That voice!

QUEEN OF H. And that!

KING OF C. 'Tis she!

QUEEN OF H. 'Tis he!

KING OF C. Yes.

QUEEN OF H. No.

KING OF C. It is!

QUEEN OF H. It cannot be!
Hold still, my heart!
It is the King of Clubs; I met him oft
At the Salon in Paris. He had then
Just reached his natural vingt-un. Ah me!

KING OF C. She speaks! Ah, speak again; and "by the card
Equivocation would undo us!" say,
Canst thou, and wilt thou, fly with me alone?
Or must I make a general to-do,
And with a conquering Pam-flush sweep the board?

QUEEN OF H. Alack, I'm limited to these sad walls,
And you can't play so high.

KING OF C. I'll play the deuce
But I will win thee!—Is there not a cavern
Beneath this tower?

QUEEN OF H. I don't exactly know,
But rather am inclined to think there is.

KING OF C. Enough! At eight to-night I'll through it lead
Some chosen hearts, and force the King of Spades

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To give thee freedom! That I swear to do,
Or "go up one life" in the great attempt.

QUEEN. That's what I call a trump. Propitious fate!
Good day, good knight; and mind you call at eight.

KING. Oh *sink* your doubts, nor to your *sighs* give way,
I'll *cater* for your good, and ne'er be*tray*.

AIR.—KING.

("*Had I a heart*," *&c.*)

The Knave of Hearts, for falsehood framed,
Alone could injure you:
Believe me, I should feel ashamed
To cheat a Queen so true.
Go, lady, to St. James's-street,
At White's or Brookes's ring,
A friend in ev'ry Club you'll meet,
A lover in their King!

QUEEN. I'll doubt no more; till eight, dear love, adieu,
And I'll believe thee, like thy beard, true-blue.

(*Exit Queen*)

KING OF CLUBS. (*To Pam.*) Go, summon up my stoutest clubs to handle
These spades as they deserve, and let the hearts
That have escaped the fray come bounding now
Around the standard of their injured Queen.

Enter Clubs and Hearts with standards, &c.

AIR—KING OF CLUBS.

("*Scots, wha ha'e.*")

Hearts that have for freedom bled,
Clubs that I have often led,
Welcome suits, both black and red,
Up for victory!
Now's the time, and now's the hour,
See of spades the sable show'r,
Playing "Brag," while in their power
Tricks and knavery.

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Who would spare a traitor knave?
Who would call on Pope to save?
Lest a spade should dig his grave,
Let him cut and flee:
Who for Hearts' fair Queen and Pam,
Caring not for spades a D—n!
Will lose the rub or win the slam!
Let him on with me!

(*Exit King of Clubs.*)

PAM. Cards!—Face!—Shuffle and Cut!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.

Interior of Prison, as before.

The QUEEN OF HEARTS *discovered.*

QUEEN OF H. Was ever card so kept upon the rack
As I am? How long must I here remain
To play at Patience by myself? Alack!
The King of Clubs! Where sticks he by the way?
Sure Time has grown club-footed, it doth limp
So tardily along. He said he'd call
At eight; and see, the turret clock is just
About to score it. Strike, O clock! strike hard;
Knock down the spades by which I'm double-guarded,
And lead up to the Queen!

AIR.—QUEEN.

(Gavotte de Vestris.)

"I can't get out:"
(I quote the words of Yorick's starling.)
"I cant get out,"
So Sterne-ly here I sing.
King of Spades is cruel,
Keeps me without fuel,

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Gives me water gruel:
Kill him in a duel,
King of Clubs, do—there's a jewel.
" I can't get out."

Strike, strike, O! clock;
As yet you've only struck three-quarters:
Strike, strike, O! clock;
One more will make a *whole*.
Soon that King provoking,
His nose here 'll be poking,
If I cry out " Woah! King,"
He'll pretend I'm joking.
To protect me now I've no King.
Strike, strike, O! clock.

(*1st Verse repeated.*)

(To the slow part.)

Unless he his promise breaks,
He'll come in a brace of shakes.

(*Clock strikes to " Haydn's" (and the Queen's) " Surprise." Flourish without. The wall of the prison is knocked in. Enter the* KING OF CLUBS.)

QUEEN OF H. Methought I heard a noise.

KING OF CLUBS (*advancing.*) If you did not,
Sweetheart, you must be very deaf indeed.

QUEEN OF H. What do I see? Ah, liberty; I'm out!—

KING OF C. You shall be *by a hide*. The enemy
Gave in at my first show. The King and Queen
Of Spades are prisoners. Clubs are trumps this round,
And Hearts shall be the next! What news with you?

(*To* PAM, *who enters hastily.*)

PAM. My liege, the Knave of Hearts defies your Majesty
To single combat and at single stick.

KING OF C. We do accept his challenge. Tell the Knave
We'll beat him out of doors!

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DUO.—Queen of Hearts and King of Clubs.

(from Tancredi.)

Clubs shall the trump be! The scamp O, shall decamp O,
Off he shall tramp O—While laughter roars.

Be not afraid O! I'm not. — I've / He's — quelled the spade O,

And soon this rebel — I'll / He'll — beat out o'doors.

The saucy knave, he
Shall cry peccavi!
And on his marrow bones play at all fours.
He! He!
Shall on his marrow bones play at all fours.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE VII.

The Court-yard of the Palace.

Grand March, from Faust. Entrée of Clubs, Hearts, &c. with the King *and* Queen of Spades, *and others of their suite, prisoners;* Pam, *the* Queen *and* Knave of Hearts.

Knave of Hearts. What says the oracle? We sent to ask
Which party should prevail.

Pam. Sir Knave, the oracle
Has answered, "Cherry colour."

Knave of Hearts. Cherry colour!
Victoria! That's our own! I do remember
The Ghost did also say that red should win!
I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pounds.
Courage, my heart! Trump out! (*Trumpet sounds*) Again! again!

(*The trumpet is answered.*) *Enter the* King of Clubs.

King of Clubs. Of one or both of us the time is come.

Knave of Hearts. With all my heart; but 'tis your suit will fail:

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I bear a charmed life! The oracle
Has said that cherry colour shall prevail.

KING OF CLUBS. Despair thy charm!
And let the demon thou so long hast served
Tell thee, false Knave, that there are cherries black
As well as cherries red!

KNAVE OF HEARTS. Accursed be the tongue that tells me so,
And ditto ditto to the juggling fiends
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. Lay on, great Club!

KING OF CLUBS. My crown and sceptre both upon the rub.

(*Flourish.—They fight.*)

KING OF CLUBS (*hitting him on the head.*) One for his nob!

(*Trips him up.*) Two for his heels!

KNAVE OF HEARTS. I'm low!

KING OF CLUBS. I'm high!

KNAVE OF HEARTS. I'm Jack!

KING OF CLUBS. And I the game!
Laugh and lay down your cares, fair Queen of Hearts,
The pool is yours!

QUEEN OF HEARTS. It looks a rich one!—Have you all put in?
And are you all content that I should win?
I drest the board in trembling and in fear,
For even Pope might fail to save me here.
Mine is a ticklish game of speculation,
And I but play to gain your approbation.
Oh! on this point pray let it be decided;
I trust your honours will not be divided.
Come, let me see your hands—I hope you're strong
In hearts for me, and mean to hold them long.
Ye, who subscribe to all the clubs in town,

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Will scarce club up to put my poor club down:
Ye, who have left your counters for my shop,
Say, will ye make the Queen of Hearts a stop?
Don't *put out* hastily *a pair* of Bards,
But deal with them and me for "Playing Cards."

(*To the Orchestra.*)

Our new Olympic Game, thus safe from ill,
We'll draw for partners and have one quadrille,
The Beaten Knave shall on the fiddle play,
And call the figure which we cut to day.

(*The Ace of Spades produces a violin and bow from his Chancellor's bag, and hands them to the Knave of Hearts.*)

KNAVE OF HEARTS (*mounting a seat*). "En place!"
Hart's New Set!

The King of Clubs leads out the Queen of Hearts,—The King of Spades, his own royal partner,—The Knave of Spades, a Maid of Honour,—and Pam, the Deuce.

Quadrille.

Knave of Hearts calling the figures in the following order:—

"Matrimony,"—"Intrigue,"—"Pam Seul,"—"Pool,"—"Game,"—

And the curtain falls on a general shuffle by the whole pack.

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10

THE BEULAH SPA.

A BURLETTA,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

CHARLES DANCE,

AUTHOR OF

MISAPPREHENSION; TALK OF THE DEVIL; HE'S NOT A-MISS; THE WATER PARTY; KILL OR CURE; A MATCH IN THE DARK; LOOK AT HOME, &c.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL OLYMPIC,

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18*th*, 1833.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

(*Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.*)

1833.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sydney Beauchamp	Mr. JAMES VINING.
Captain Kildare	Mr. BROUGHAM.
Mr. Batchelor	Mr. F. MATTHEWS.
Magnus Templeton	Mr. KEELEY.
Hector Templeton	Mr. COLLIER.
James (Head Waiter at the Spa)	Mr. SALTER.
Richard	Mr. EATON.
Leander (the Minstrel)	Mr. WEBSTER, jun.
Mrs. Templeton	Mrs. TAYLEURE.
Caroline Grantley	Madame VESTRIS.
Grace Ormonde	Miss FERGUSON.
Parker	Miss PINCOTT.

WAITERS, SERVANTS, &c.

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THE BEULAH SPA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Dressing Room in BEAUCHAMP'S *House.*

BEAUCHAMP *is discovered sitting before the glass, at a dressing table, and shaving himself.* RICHARD *stands behind his chair. The side of* BEAUCHAMP'S *face next the audience is lathered.*

BEAU. Oh, Caroline! Caroline! *(winces, as if hurt, and then turns coolly to Richard.)* Some more of that powder, Richard; I have cut myself again. *(Richard hands powder.)*

RICH. Upon my life, sir, you should take more care. Now do put off talking about Miss Caroline till you have done shaving.

BEAU. If I don't mind it, Richard, why should you?

RICH. I'll tell you what it is, sir; you must let me finish shaving you to-day—you must indeed, sir. If you don't, you won't be fit to be seen.

BEAU. Well; just as you like.

(RICHARD *turns* BEAUCHAMP'S *chair towards the audience, and proceeds with shaving him.*)

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RICH. There, sir—there—now please to be steady, and I'll have done in two minutes. I'll talk all the time about Miss Caroline, and—

BEAU. Aye, do, Richard, do.

RICH. Now don't, sir, don't. Upon my word, if you wont cut Miss Caroline a bit, you'll make me cut you;—there, sir, there—that's the way—it's easy enough—it's only to hold your tongue, and that's easier than talking; and you hate trouble as much as you love Miss Caroline. Steady now, please, sir; I'm just coming to your throat. As I was going to say, sir—Miss Caroline—

BEAU. Well—

RICH. Miss Caroline, sir—

BEAU. Go on, Richard.

RICH. I've done, sir. (BEAUCHAMP *seems lost in thought.*) (*Aside.*) And it's lucky I have, for I did'nt know *what* I was going to say. (*Aloud.*) Wont you wash your face, sir?

BEAU. Eh? Oh,—yes, yes. (*Rises and goes to table.*) (*Knock heard at the street door.*) Richard—see who that is.

(*Exit* RICHARD, L. H.)

Caroline talked of making up a party to go to the Beulah Spa to-day. I wish from my soul that she were a little less giddy; but her spells are around me, and the victim must submit to his fate. Would that I had had courage to propose to her!

Re-enter RICHARD.

RICH. Mr. Batchelor, sir.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Tiresome, fidgety, vexing man. (*Aloud.*) Beg Mr. Batchelor to walk in; and put a chair—

RICH. This way, sir, if you please.

(*Enter* BATCHELOR. *Exit* RICHARD.)

BEAU. Good morning to you, Mr. Batchelor!

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BATCH. Thank you, but you wish me what I can't have, for the morning is more than doubtful.

BEAU. Indeed? I'm sorry for that.

BATCH. What *can* it signify? If you were not sorry for that, you would be sorry for something else. There's little but annoyance in this world that I can discover.

BEAU. Nay, nay. Perhaps you are not well to-day—how do you find yourself?

BATCH. I've scarcely had time to look for myself. I was no sooner out of bed this morning than the bell rang for breakfast, which was ready half-an-hour sooner than usual, just because I had over-slept myself, and wanted it to be half-an-hour later; and I had no sooner done breakfast than my sister Templeton hurried me off here with a message to you—though she knows that moving the moment after I have eaten is the one thing that annoys me.

BEAU. Wont you sit down, sir?

BATCH. No, thank you; it's not worth while; I should get up again in two minutes. I hate sitting down; it gives me the fidgets.

BEAU. I'm quite sorry you should have had so much trouble. Wouldn't a message by a servant or a note have done as well?

BATCH. Of course—either would—and so I told her—but you might as well expect a woman to *talk* reason as to listen to it.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Sour crab-apple. (*Aloud.*) Well, sir, what says Mrs. Templeton?

BATCH. Oh, it's only to tell you that the party to this non-sensical—what's the name of the place?

BEAU. The Beulah Spa?

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BATCH. Ah! Beulah Spa. Well—the party stands positively for to-day.

BEAU. And the time is?

BATCH. *We* start at two; and you will be expected to meet us there as near three as you can.

BEAU. Mrs. Templeton goes, then?

BATCH. Oh, yes—safe enough.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Horrid woman! (*Aloud.*) I am delighted to hear it.

BATCH. Are you? Then there's more delight in store for you—she takes Magnus and Hector, her two babes, as she calls them—cubs, as *I* call them.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Pestilential little wretches. (*Aloud.*) Aye, indeed?

BATCH. Yes; arn't you delighted at that too? Surely they are enough to make any party agreeable.

BEAU. Shall we have the pleasure of your company?

BATCH. If *you* find any pleasure in my company, I can only tell you it's more than *I* do. However, I am going—though I hate it; it's just the one thing that annoys me.

BEAU. Why go, if you hate it?

BATCH. Because I hate staying at home alone just as much. My sister wishes me to go; and it's as well to be obliging and agreeable when one can—do you agree with me?

BEAU. Perfectly.

BATCH. Then I had better be off while you do; for my sister is kind enough to tell me that nobody can agree with me for long.

BEAU. My dear sir, I never contradict any body.

BATCH. The devil you don't; I wish you were my sister.

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BEAU. Sir, you do me honour.

BATCH. Yes; too much honour, I suppose. However, I'm gone. You'll be there at the time?

BEAU. Without fail—*(rings)*. (*Enter* RICHARD.) Richard—the door! (*Exit* RICHARD—BATCHELOR *is following.*) Mr. Batchelor—one moment, if you please.

BATCH. Well, sir.

BEAU. I suppose there can be no doubt that — I mean—I imagine in any case that—my compliments to Mrs. Templeton, if you please.

BATCH. Compliments—trash—that is all understood. *(To* RICHARD, *who is following.)* Now, don't follow me to the door, for that's just the one thing that annoys me.(*Exit*, L.H.)

BEAU. Confound that shyness of mine! If Caroline should not go, I shall be pleasantly situated with all these odious people.

(*Re-enter* RICHARD, L. H.)

BEAU. Richard, I wanted to ask Mr Batchelor a question about Miss Grantley, and (would you believe it, Richard?) I hadn't courage to mention her name!

RICH. Well, sir; I declare I never see any gentleman so shy as you are. I wonder for my part you ever had courage enough to pop the question to the young lady herself.

BEAU. My dear Richard, I never had, though I have tried twenty times.

RICH. I'll tell you what to do, sir. I have it—

BEAU. Well!

RICH. I have done such a thing three times, with different sweet-hearts, and found it answer every time.

BEAU. What is it?

RICH. Send her a valentine, sir.

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BEAU. Pshaw!

RICH. *Do*, sir; I can lend you a beauty to copy.

BEAU. (*Turning from him.*) Oh! Caroline, Caroline!

RICH. Why you must have seen it, sir. It began just that way—

"Oh, Susan, Susan!
How you use one."

BEAU. Give me my coat.

(*Takes off his dressing gown*—RICHARD *helps him on with his coat.*)

RICH. Shall I say over the rest of the Valentine, sir, in case you want it?

BEAU. No, my good fellow, no—I am much obliged to you; but it wont suit me.

RICH. Please to hear it, sir, and then you can judge:—"Oh, Susan, Susan!"

BEAU. My hat and gloves—(RICHARD *hands them*); and if I don't return home sooner, let my cab be at Mrs. Templeton's door at two o'clock. (*Going.*)

RICH. Yes, sir,—"Oh, Susan, Susan!"

BEAU. (*turning*) Richard, Richard, don't forget. (*Exit.* L.H.)

RICH. Hang me if he has'nt seen it then, for that's the way Susan's answer began—

"Richard, Richard, don't forget
The tea-party where first we met."

And I didn't forget; but she did—a false hussy—but I don't blame her. She never would have used me so if it hadn't been for that great gawkey Life Guardsman. Didn't I wish myself about a foot taller for his sake! (*Exit.* R. H.)

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SCENE II.

A Dressing Room at MISS GRANTLEY'S, *two Doors in flat—Two toilet Tables, one on each side*—CAROLINE GRANTLEY *is seated at one,* R. H.—GRACE ORMONDE *at the other,* L. H., *back to back.*

CAR. How do you get on, Grace?

GRACE. Oh! I don't know, Caroline,—we country girls know little of toilet arrangements in comparison with you London ladies.

CAR. Then, my dear, it's the more fortunate for you that you have been able to make that little go a great way.

GRACE. What do you mean, Caroline?

CAR. How old are you, my dear?

GRACE. Oh! you know well enough—not quite twenty.

CAR. Are you engaged to be married or not?

GRACE. Why, you know I am.

CAR. Well, that is what I call making your little knowledge go a great way.

GRACE. Perhaps you don't know what it is to have an Irish Officer make love to you. Captain Kildare was so very pressing that I positively could not help saying "Yes."

CAR. Did you *wish* to help it?

GRACE. Fie! Caroline, how can you ask such a question?

CAR. With perfect ease,—and you may answer it in the same way. Come, my dear, you may tell the truth,—there is no *man* here.

GRACE. Well, then, I will. I did *not* wish to help it. I wouldn't have said *no* to him for the best estate in the county. Oh! my dear Caroline, if you had seen the fidget I was in while he was in the back parlour with Mamma.

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CAR. I can fancy it, my dear,—however, it was all right.

GRACE. She's the best Mamma in the county.

CAR. Of course, if she agrees with you upon that point.

GRACE. And Captain Kildare is——well, well—he is to follow me to town at the end of the week;—and then you shall judge for yourself.

CAR. Is he tall?

GRACE. Not very.

CAR. Is he handsome?

GRACE. Very.

CAR. Is he rich?

GRACE. Not very.

CAR. Fond of you, of course?

GRACE. Very.

CAR. And he'll remain so?

GRACE. For life.

CAR. How do you know?

GRACE. He has sworn it.

CAR. By what?

GRACE. By the Powers.

CAR. Then, depend upon it, you are quite safe.

GRACE. Quizzing again! Upon my word, Caroline, to hear you talk, one would think that you had made up your mind never to be married. I'm sure, at least, one wouldn't suspect that you had kept me awake until three o'clock this morning to hear you hold forth in praise of a certain Mr. Sydney Beauchamp.

CAR. My dear, was it so late before we went to sleep?

GRACE. My dear, it certainly was.

CAR. I'm quite ashamed of myself, I declare; but I say he's a nice, quiet, gentlemanlike creature,—is he not?

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GRACE. That he is certainly.

CAR. And I'm convinced he loves me.

GRACE. So am I, even from the little I have seen of him; but I must say, that, after a twelvemonths' attention, it would be rather less inconvenient if he would tell you so. If it were my case, I would *make* him.

CAR. Would you *really*, Miss Country Innocence?—(*Rising, and coming forward*—GRACE *comes to meet her.*) Well, to be candid with you, I am of the same opinion. It doesn't become a woman to be too forward; but if a man really is worth having—really loves one—and really is shy—justice to both parties calls on one to give him a little assistance. At all events, my mind is made up—I am growing tired of suspense—and, one way or another, I will make him speak out.

SONG.

I believe he's in earnest,
But I long to find out,—
Fortune's wheel, as thou turnest.
Take me out of this doubt.
I've no feeling for shy men,
Who make flirting a trade;
But maintain that for shy men
Some excuse may be made.
No, he'll never deceive me,
Though I now and then doubt;
And I own he'd relieve me
If he would but speak out.

As there's nothing more pleasing
Than candour and truth;
So there's nothing more teasing
Than a too-bashful youth.
My poor heart! how it flutters
When he seems going to say—
"Do you love me?"—then mutters
What a very fine day!

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Still he'll never deceive me,
Though I now and then doubt;
When he knows he'd relieve me,
Why can't he speak out?

On my life! it's provoking
To worry me so;
If he's serious or joking,
How on earth shall I know?
One moment he'll say things
Which the next he destroys;—
Are women's hearts play-things
To be broken by boys?
Sure woman was never
So tortured by doubt;
Though I lose him for ever!
I'll *make* speak out.

GRACE. And, I must say, I think you are quite right.

CAR. Now listen, and I'll tell you my plans. This party to the Beulah Spa is a bright idea of my own; and I expect, by means of it, to gain two important points:—First, to ascertain, beyond a doubt, that Sydney loves me—and me alone;—and next, to drive him into a *leetle* bit of a corner, and make him tell me so.

GRACE. I see what you mean; and I'll keep out of his way, and your's too, all day.

CAR. I intend you to do just the reverse.

GRACE. How so?

CAR. I mean you to make desperate love to him.

GRACE. Me—Caroline—me?

CAR. You—Grace—you.

GRACE. What will Captain Kildare say?

CAR. What will Mrs. Grundy say? Why, child, Captain Kildare is quietly with his regiment at Coventry.

GRACE. But he might hear of it. (CAROLINE *rings bell.*)

CAR. As you are going to marry a military man, the

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sooner you learn discipline the better. Therefore, attention! right face! march to the Beulah Spa, and make love to Mr. Sydney Beauchamp. (*Tapping outside door in flat,* R. H., *Takes two notes from her table—goes to the door—opens it—and speaks as to somebody outside,*) Take this note immediately to *Mrs.* Templeton's, and give *this* into her maid Parker's own hands. (*Shuts door.*)

GRACE. What possible good can my making love to Mr. Beauchamp do?

CAR. I want to see whether he will permit his attention to be engrossed by any other woman than myself.

GRACE. Your plan must fail,—he never would do such a thing, at all events, before your face.

CAR. I don't mean my face to be there.

GRACE. Not there?

CAR. At least, not in such a shape as that he shall know me.

GRACE. You puzzle me completely.

CAR. Did you never hear of such a thing as a disguise?

GRACE. A disguise! oh, dear! oh, dear! what fun—I'm so glad I came to town; but tell me, don't you mean to make yourself known at last?

CAR. That must depend upon circumstances.

GRACE. Then must I go alone to this Mrs. Templeton's? It will be very awkward, as I am a stranger to her.

CAR. No, no; I shall go there with you, to introduce you, and then make some excuse to return home. I shall promise to *follow*, but I mean to precede the rest of the party.

GRACE. You funny madcap thing! One moment—What sort of a woman is Mrs. Templeton?

CAR. Ah, that's the worst of it; but I couldn't help it.

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Although my own mistress, it wouldn't do for you and me to go on such a party as this without a chaperone; and there are so few people in town, that I could get no one else.

GRACE. Is she so very disagreeable?

CAR. My dear, she is absolutely poisonous, and there's no other word for it. She is a prim, stiff, starched widow, who rails against the present system of education, and preaches up the system of what she calls *her* time. In pursuance of this she has done her best, or rather her worst, to prevent her dear sons, Magnus and Hector, from getting too forward; and she has, in a great measure, succeeded. They are *not* too forward in any thing—but their manners. The consequence is, that although these odious little wretches, with their great names, are, I believe, seventeen and eighteen years of age, they are babies in information, boys in dress, and bears in behaviour.

GRACE. What an interesting family! But didn't I understand you that Mrs. Templeton has a brother residing with her?—does *he* allow all this?

CAR. What, Mr. Batchelor? Wait till you see him, and you'll soon discover whether he is the sort of man to make bad better. (*A tapping is heard outside the door.*) Who's that?

SERVANT. (*without.*) The carriage is at the door, ma'am.

CAR. Very well, let it wait.

(*They proceed to the glasses, and put on their bonnets.*)

GRACE. Now mind, Caroline, if you have any other instructions to give me, you must let me have them as we go along.

CAR. (*Coming forward.*) Come hither, and let me look at you. (GRACE *comes to her.*)

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Upon my word, I never saw any thing half so killing. I begin to fear my plan is a rash one.

GRACE. You *don't* fear it now. You think a great deal too well of yourself to fear any such thing. "Come, my dear, you may tell the truth; there is no *man* here," as you said just now. (*Exeunt laughing, door in flat* R. H.)

SCENE III.

A drawing room in MRS. TEMPLETON'S *house. Large folding-doors in centre.*

Enter PARKER, *with a note in her hand.*

PARK. A note for my mistress, and another for me—both from Miss Grantley; and mine ordered to be given into my own hands. What can she want? I shouldn't wonder if—no, that's not it. Perhaps—no, nor that neither. Now I've got it—she's going—no, it isn't that. What a goose I am to keep looking at the outside of a note, and wondering what's in the inside, when I have only to open it to see. (*Opens note, and reads.*) "Parker"—Well, I'm sure—Parker! Short and sweet, however. Well, well; I know what I know; and the time may come when—but never mind that now. (*Reads.*) "Parker,—I have written to Mrs. Templeton to beg the favour of her to lend you to me for the rest of the day"—Upon my word, it's a pleasant thing to be a servant or an umbrella—one gets borrowed. (*Reads.*) "I have some very, very particular business in hand; and you are the only person I know quick and clever enough to give me the sort of assistance I want"—Quick and clever! ahem! Sweet sauce with mutton, to make you believe it's venison. (*Reads.*) "Your mistress and all the family are going out

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for the day, and therefore, of course, she can spare you. I am coming to call on Mrs. Templeton presently, and I will then give you further instructions."—If this hasn't something to do with that Mr. Sydney Beauchamp, my name's not Parker—and my name *is* Parker, as sure as I mean it to be something else that my mistress little dreams of. (*Affectedly.*) Really, it's extremely puzzling to have two ways of becoming a lady open to one. Shall I be Mrs. Magnus Templeton, or Mrs. Hector Templeton? Let's try how they sound. (*Knock heard at street-door.*) Ah, there's a knock—now, I'll fancy company coming to see me. (*Courtseying and backing towards the wing.*) "Good morning, Mrs. Magnus"—"Good morning, ma'am"—"Good morning, Mrs. Hector"—"Good morning, sir." (*Resuming her natural voice.*) Stop a bit—I've just thought of a draw-back: I don't mind Mistress for a mother-in-law; but I don't think I can stand old sour Batchelor for an uncle—

(L. H. *Enter* MR. BATCHELOR.)

No, I cannot stand old Batchelor for an uncle. (*Turns upon him, and screams.*)

BATCH. And who the devil asked you to stand old Batchelor for an uncle?

PARK. Me, sir? Nobody—nothing—never—I'm ready to take my oath I never spoke.

BATCH. I dare say—any lie to get those young monkeys out of a scrape. Come, which of them said it?

PARK. (*Aside.*) Any thing to gain time. (*Aloud.*) Both, sir—neither.

BATCH. I *will* find out—and when I do, I'll give him such a knock. (*Knock heard at street-door.*)

PARK. There's a knock at the door, sir.

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BATCH. I hear it. Where's my sister?

PARK. In the study, sir, with Master Magnus and Master Hector—I'm to go to her at half-past one. Please, sir, what's o'clock now?

BATCH. (*Looking at his watch.*) Five-and-twenty minutes past—

PARK. Oh dear! (*Going.*)

BATCH. Stay, Parker—tell me who it is.

(*Enter Servant.*)

SERV. Mr. Sydney Beauchamp, sir.

L.H. *Enter* BEAUCHAMP; *as* BATCHELOR *turns towards him,* PARKER *makes her escape through folding doors.*

BEAU. How d'ye do again, sir?

BATCH. Much the same, sir. (*Turning to look for* PARKER.) Come! Gone? You wont get off that way. (*Turning to* BEAUCHAMP.) I'm out of humour.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Surprising!

BATCH. I have discovered a piece of impertinence on the part of one of my nephews, and that is just the one thing that annoys me. As soon as I find out which it is, I'll give him such a knock. (*Knock heard at street-door.*) Damn the knocks!

BEAU. (*Aside.*) I will take courage. Now for it. Pray, sir—

Enter Servant, L. H.

SERV. Miss Grantley and Miss Ormonde, sir. (*Exit Servant.*)

BATCH. Shew them up. I wish my sister would be so good to be here to receive her own company—I'm a bad hand at bowing and scraping.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) A bear that hasn't learnt to dance!

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(L. H. *Re-enter Servant, shewing in the Ladies.*

BATCH. (*To* CAROLINE.) Good morning, ma'am.

CAR. Good morning, sir. (*Aside to* GRACE.) *One* of the family!

BATCH. (*To* GRACE.) Same to you, ma'am, though I haven't the honour of knowing you.

GRACE. (*Courtseying.*) Thank you, sir.

CAR. I beg your pardon;—Miss Ormonde—Mr. Batchelor. (*To* BEAUCHAMP.) Well, Sydney—(*shaking hands with him*) —you mean to join our party to-day, I presume?

BEAU. I shall be delighted. (*Confused, and getting across to* GRACE.) And you also, I hope, Miss Ormonde?

GRACE. Oh yes.

CAR. But where is our lady patroness?

(*Folding doors are partially opened.*)

BATCH. Here she comes—(*aside*)—cubs and all.

(PARKER *enters from folding doors and approaches Caroline.*)

PARK. (*To* CAROLINE.) My mistress and the young gentlemen are coming directly, Miss.

CAR. (*Aside to* PARKER.) Get your bonnet on, and be ready for me. (*Exit* PARKER, R. H.)

The folding doors are thrown wide open, and MRS. TEMPLETON *enters, holding* MAGNUS *by one hand, and* HECTOR *by the other.*

MRS. TEMP. Well, here you all are I declare—extremely punctual, upon my word. Punctuality——Magnus, my babe, what is it your copy-book says about that?

MAGNUS. Punctuality is the soul of business.

MRS. TEMP. Good boy, good boy. Miss Grantley, my dear, I hope you are quite well. You don't present me to your friend.

CAROLINE. (*Aside.*) You don't give me time. (*Aloud.*)

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Grace, my dear—(*Aside to her.*) don't laugh—(*Aloud.*) allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Templeton.—(*Grace courtseys.*)

MRS. TEMP. And her boys, Magnus and Hector, if you please. (*Courtseys.*)

CAR. (*Aside to Grace.*)—Make another courtsey for the boys.

MRS. TEMP. Children, where are your manners? Why don't you bow?—(*They bow.*)—(*Grace courtseys again:*)—very well, my dears, very well.

GRACE. (*Aside to Caroline.*) I can't bear this—I shall laugh—I'm sure I shall.

CAROLINE. (*Aside to her.*) If you do I'll pinch you—you'll ruin my plans.

MRS. TEMP. Mr. Beauchamp, I'm delighted to see you—(*Beauchamp bows.*) you got my message, of course?

BATCH. You may say "of course,"—didn't I take it?

MRS. TEMP. Brother, I must request——Mr. Beauchamp, *you* know my boys—boys, you know Mr. Beauchamp.

MAG. & HEC. To be sure we do. (*They break from* MRS. TEMP. *and run to* BEAU.—*each takes one of his hands, and shakes it violently.*)—How d'ye do, Mr. Beauchamp? How d'ye do?

BEAU. (*Trying to get rid of them.*) Quite well, I thank you.

MRS. TEMP. There, come away—Mr. Beauchamp may mistake your high spirits for rudeness.——We shall have a fine day for our party I trust—though, by the bye, I forgot to look at the glass—but my boys have looked at it I dare say; children, what says the weather glass? Now don't both answer at once—remember Lord Chesterfield—Come, Hector, first.

HEC. (*Sharply.*) Well—what?

MRS. TEMP. What says the glass, my love?

HEC. (*Rudely.*) Bother the glass.

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MRS. TEMP. You mus'n't say bother the glass, my child.

HEC. Why not? I'm sure the glass bothers me.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside to him.*) I'll punish you for this when we are alone—(*Aloud to Caroline.*) Did you hear the dear boy's play upon words, Miss Grantley.

CAR. Yes, ma'am, he's a delightful boy—(*To Grace.*) I didn't hear a word he said.

GRACE. Nor I.

MRS. TEMP. But his spirits quite run away with him—If he had but his brother's mildness of disposition! Magnus, love.

MAG. Yes, mamma.

MRS. TEMP. Have you looked at the barometer this morning?

MAG. Yes, dear mamma, but I don't recollect anything about what it said.

MRS. TEMP. Did you observe those answers, Miss Grantley?

CAR. What, ma'am?

MRS. TEMP. Well, you astonish me—but to be sure you're not a mother, otherwise you would know how interesting it is to watch the gradual development of your children's dispositions. I speak to Hector, and the quickness—I might almost say—the impatience of his temperament is observable in his manner of saying, "well—what?" On the other hand, I address myself to Magnus—and the mild amiability of *his* nature beams, through his affectionate little "yes, mamma."—Sweet child!—(*Pats his head.*)

GRACE. (*Aside.*) We may as well attend to her—she'll go on till we do.

CAR. (*Aside.*) What did she say?

GRACE. (*Aside.*) I don't know.

CAR. Yes, ma'am—decidedly—I always thought so.

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MRS. TEMP. Ah! you were not attending to me—I thought not. These matters don't interest Miss Grantley, Mr. Beauchamp—you see—she is not married.

BEAU. (*Confused.*) Yes—ma'am—yes.

MRS. TEMP. *You* are not married, by the bye, either.

BEAU: (*More confused.*) No—ma'am—no.

GRACE. (*Aside to Caroline.*) Look at him, Caroline—there's a delicious bit of confusion.

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) Be quiet, you foolish thing.

BATCH. (*Aside to Beau.*) That's the way my Sister will go on all day, and then she wonders that I grumble.

BEAU. (*Aside to him.*) It is annoying, certainly.

MRS. TEMP. What is the matter? Have I frightened you all by talking about marriage?

HEC. (*Going to her.*) You hav'n't frightened me Ma', I can tell you—I should like to be married.

MRS. TEMP. You? you forward little rogue—we'll speak of that ten years hence—It will be time enough for you to think of it when your elder brother is provided for.

HEC. (*Going to* MAGNUS,) Come, Maggy, go along and be provided for.

MAG. (*Going to* MRS. TEMP.) Please, dear mamma, may I be married then?

MRS. TEMP. Come, come, child—don't let me have any more of this nonsense.

MAG. It isn't nonsense, mamma, it isn't indeed—I should like it very much.

HEC. And so should I.

MRS. TEMP. What can such infants as you know about marriage?

BATCH. I should think they both understood house-keeping,

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for you have kept them at home all their lives.

MRS. TEMP. Brother, I must again request you not to interfere with my domestic arrangements. My dear friends, pray excuse these children, they are going to their first party to-day, and the notion of it has quite turned their little heads.

CAR. Oh don't make any excuse for them, ma'am, pray—I think them quite amusing—(*Aside to* GRACE.) Wouldn't you like to marry one of them?

GRACE. (*Aside.*) Of all things.

CAR. (*Aside.*) Then I'll give you a chance.—(*Aloud.*) Young gentlemen.

GRACE. (*Aside.*) Don't, Caroline—what are you about?

BEAU. (*To Boys.*) Miss Grantley is calling you.

MAG. & HEC. (*Running to her.*) Yes, Miss.

CAR. You say you wish to be married. Now—look at us, here we are, two spinsters on our preferment—(*To* MAGNUS.) Which will you have?

MAG. Thank you, Miss, but I don't want either.—(*Turns away from them.*)

HEC. Nor I neither.—(*Follows* MAG.)

GRACE. (*Aside to* CAR.) Civil at all events.

CAR. Particularly so.

MRS. TEMP. Now that would be rudeness in any body else's children, but these dear babes are *so* playful.—(*Looking at her watch.*) But you will take some refreshment before we go—Magnus, love, ring the bell.

(*He proceeds to do so at* R. H. I. E. HEC. *jumps on his back.*)

Hector, child, you'll tire yourself before we start—Come down, I beg of you.—(*Angrily, and aside to* BATCH.) Brother I'm surprised you allow this.

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BATCH. (*Aside to her.*) I don't like to interfere in your domestic arrangements. (HEC. *gets down*—MAG. *rings bell.*)

Enter SERVANT.

MRS. TEMP. Bring refreshments—(*Exit* SERVANT.) Mr. Beauchamp, did you ever hear my boys recite?

BEAU. Yes, ma'am, often.

MRS. TEMP. (*To* CAR.) Then it's you who haven't heard them.

CAR. Oh, yes, ma'am—don't you remember? I heard them the day before yesterday.

MRS. TEMP. So you did, I declare. (*To Grace*) *You can't* have heard them.

GRACE. No, ma'am.

MRS. TEMP. Then I'll give you a treat. Boys, come hither—(*they come to her, and she takes each by a hand*)—My boys have been educated under my own eye, and don't know one bit more than they ought.

BATCH. Query, as much.

MRS. TEMP. Brother! Magnus, my love—what was that sweet stanza about the cattle? Come, now, be my own babe—hold up your head, and recite.

MAGNUS.

Cattle court the zephyrs bland,
Where the streamlet wanders cool,
Or in sullen silence stand
Midway in the marshy pool.

(*Two servants enter with refreshments,* R. H., *place them, and exeunt.*)

MAG. Oh, here's the luncheon.

(MAGNUS *and* HECTOR *break from* MRS. TEMP. *and run to the table—each seizes a jelly, and begins to eat.*

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MRS. TEMP. Magnus, you shock me. Hector, I blush for you. Don't think of helping yourselves until you have offered some to the ladies.

(*Hector takes a spoonful of his own jelly, and holds it to Caroline's mouth.*)

HEC. Have a bit, Miss?

CAR. (*Courtseying.*) Not any, I thank you.

BATCH. (*Aside to* BEAU.) If you should ever have a family of boys, Mr. Beauchamp, you'll know how to bring them up.

BEAU. (*Aside to him.*) It may serve as a lesson, certainly.

MRS. TEMP. All spirits, I assure you, Miss Grantley. Magnus will convince you in a minute that they know good manners. Magnus, love.

MAG. Yes, mamma (*eating jelly*).

MRS. TEMP. Wait on Miss Ormonde—*you* would'nt offer a lady a spoonful of jelly, even in joke—would you, love?

MAG. No, mamma, *that* I wouldn't.

(*As he says this, he sticks the spoon into the middle of his half-eaten jelly, and offers it to* GRACE.)

Here you are, Miss.

GRACE. Not any, thank you. (*Turns aside and laughs.*)

BATCH. That's something like good manners!

MRS. TEMP. Brother! (*Takes hold of* MAGNUS *and* HECTOR, *and draws them close to her.*) Let me see—how do we manage our party to-day?

(*Enter Servant,* L.H., *delivers a note to* CAROLINE, *and exit.*)

CAR. I have a note here which obliges me to go home immediately. I did intend to accompany you.

BEAU. And you are *not* going, Caroline?

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GRACE. (*Aside to* CAROLINE.) Look at him.

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) Don't. (*Aloud to* BEAU.) Oh, yes; I shall follow in half-an-hour, I dare say—(*to* MRS. TEMP.) Will you take Miss Ormonde in your carriage?

MRS. TEMP. With pleasure. (*To* GRACE.) Come, my dear—we shall have the *boys* with us!

GRACE. (*Aside to* CAR.) Don't you envy me?

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) Come, come, do it well. (*Aloud.*) Good bye, then, till we meet again.

MRS. TEMP. Good bye! Good bye!

CAR. (*Louder, to catch* BEAUCHAMP'S *attention.*) Good bye! (*Aside to* GRACE.) Is he coming?

GRACE. (*Aside to her.*) No; he's fidgeting.

CAR. (*Aside.*) The old story—I must go by myself.

(*Exit,* L. H.)

MRS. TEMP. Mr. Beauchamp, how do you go?

BEAU. I drive my cabriolet.

MRS. TEMP. Would you like one of my boys for a companion?

BEAU. You're very kind, ma'am. (*Aside to* BATCHELOR, *who has poked him with his elbow.*)—Get me out of that, for mercy's sake.

BATCH. (*Aside to him.*) I'll mention it as delicately as possible. (*Aloud.*) Mr. Beauchamp is much obliged to you, but he says it's a bore.

BEAU. Nay, madam, I assure you—

MRS. TEMP. Brother!

BATCH. What's the matter now?

MRS. TEMP. Didn't you see? Well; never mind. Mr. Beauchamp will have the kindness to see Miss Grantley to her carriage?

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BEAU. (*Who has been very fidgety—recovering himself.*) I shall be delighted. (*Crossing and calling after* CAROLINE.) Miss Grantley!

(*Enter Servant,* L. H.)

SERV. Miss Grantley's carriage has just driven off, sir.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Pleasant! (*Aloud to Servant.*) Is my cab here?

SERV. Yes, sir. (*Exit,* L. H.)

BEAU. Good morning! (*Bows to all, and exit,* L.H.)

(MAGNUS *and* HECTOR *run to* BATCHELOR, *and pull him about.*)

MAG. Aren't you going with us, uncle Batchy?

HEC. To be sure he is.

BATCH. (*Shaking them off.*) Get along, you troublesome ttle devils.

MRS. TEMP. (*To* GRACE.) My dear, we have a quarter-of-an hour to spare—shall I shew you the library? (*Takes* GRACE'S *hand.*) Boys, take hold of each other, and walk gently before us.

(*They join hands, race up the stage, and out through folding doors.*)

MRS. TEMP. Playful to the last, you see.

BATCH. Sweet babes!

(*Exeunt severally* MRS. TEMP. *and* GRACE, *through folding doors*—BATCHELOR, L. H.)

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

Exterior of the Inn at the Beulah Spa.

Enter, at opposite sides, JAMES *and another Waiter.*

(*Voice Without.*) Waiter ! Waiter !

JAMES. Why don't you run ?—somebody's calling waiter.

SECOND WAITER. Why don't *you* run ?—they want two seemingly,—they called waiter twice.

JAMES. Why don't I run ? Why, if I was to stay at this place another summer, I should run all away. It's such a plaguy long way from the kitchen to the gardens, that the more I have to say "coming up," the more I find myself coming down. Look at my clothes.

SECOND WAITER. Oh ! that's nothing,—have 'em taken in.

JAMES. Yes, I dare say. And if I get stout again in the winter, who's to let 'em out ? I tell you what it is—there's nothing bothers one so much as uncertainty. If I'm to be a fat man, let me be one ;—but, I say, how do we look for custom to-day ?

SECOND WAITER. Not very thick—it's getting late in the season.

JAMES. Did you see that party that came just now in the carriage ?

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SECOND WAITER. Yes,—they're gone into the gardens.

JAMES. Did you twig the lady with the two babes, as she called 'em?

SECOND WAITER. I believe you.

JAMES. Good wapping babes, don't you think?

SECOND WAITER. Ah! beauties.

JAMES. I say, mind what you're a'ter with them,—there's money there, I'll swear, by the look of it.

SECOND WAITER. Aye, that there is.

JAMES. What's become of the young lady with the smart-looking maid that came in the chariot half-an-hour before 'em?

SECOND WAITER. They're up stairs; but we're not to say any thing about their being here, you know—remember the half-sovereign.

JAMES. I know that, you fool,—I've been a waiter at Richmond, and I've held my tongue for less than half-a-sovereign before to-day.

(Voice Without). Waiter.

JAMES. Who's calling now?

SECOND WAITER. (*looking off*) Two foot passengers.

JAMES. No hurry.

KILDARE (*without*) Ostler! Waiter!

JAMES. Who's that? It sounds like a Paddy.

SECOND WAITER. (*looking off*) A gentleman on horseback.

JAMES. Has he got a groom with him?

SECOND WAITER. No.

JAMES. No *particular* hurry.

HECTOR (*without, at opposite side.*) Waiter! waiter!

SECOND WAITER (*looking off.*) I say, that's one of the babes.

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JAMES. The devil it is,—run then, and I'll come after you as quick as I can.

(*Exit* SECOND WAITER R. H.—JAMES *is following.*)

Enter CAPTAIN KILDARE. L. H.

KIL. Hold fast, you sir,—are you the waiter?

JAMES. I'm one of 'em, sir.

KIL. Only one! By the powers, I should have thought you were one-and-a-half at the least.

JAMES. I'm the *principal* waiter, sir.

KIL. And if you're *not* the principal waiter, my friend, it would be cheap at a shilling to see the one that is.

JAMES. I know I'm fat, sir, if that's what you mean.

KIL. Oh! you know that—do you? By my soul, it's a great matter for a traveller to meet with a man of information. Perhaps you know something else that I want to know.

JAMES. I don't know, sir.

KIL. How do you know you don't know, you devil, till you know what I'm going to say?—What company have you got in the house?

JAMES. We've always the best of company here, sir.

KIL. The devil a doubt of it. When your master gets his troop, sure *you* shall be his trumpeter;—but it's a party that came down here an hour ago, in a yellow carriage, that I'm looking for. There's a young damsel, I'm told, and an old gentleman, and a middle-aged lady, with two elderly children.

JAMES. Yes, sir, I know,—that party is in the gardens, sir.

KIL. And how do I get into the gardens?

JAMES. By paying a shilling, sir.

KIL. The devil fly away with the paltry shilling,—it isn't that I mean—which is the way?

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JAMES. I beg your pardon, sir—this way, sir. (*Going.*)

KIL. Is that the way?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

KIL. Then stand out of it, your coach is too slow for me. (*Passes him, and exit* R.H.)

JAMES. He is not over civil; but, I dare say, we shall agree, because I don't think he thinks much of a shilling,—and *I do* think *I do*. (*Exit* R. H.)

SCENE II.

Interior of the Gardens—the Centre of the Stage forming the Grass-plot—the Spa Well—Reading Room, &c., on left—View of the Country beyond the Centre at back.

Music.

L. H. *Enter* MAGNUS *thoughtfully—then* HECTOR *dancing—then* MRS. TEMPLETON—*then* GRACE, *leaning on* BEAUCHAMP'S *arm, and in conversation with him—lastly,* BATCHELOR *sulkily.*

Music ceases.

MRS. TEMP. Magnus, child, come hither.

MAG. Yes, mamma!

MRS. TEMP. You don't seem in good spirits.

MAG. No, mamma.

MRS. TEMP. What's the matter with you?

MAG. Something.

MRS. TEMP. What is it?

MAG. Nothing.

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MRS. TEMP. Well, I hope so—come, rouse yourself. See how your brother enjoys himself.

MAG. Ah! he's a very different sort of boy from what I am; and you know that, mamma, as well as any body.

MRS. TEMP. Nay, child, I know that he has rather more ardour than you have.

MAG. No he hasn't—he has only a different way of shewing it. There is but one person in this world who knows the extent of my ardour.

MRS. TEMP. Meaning yourself, I suppose; but your're wrong, my child, you're wrong. *He* loves noise and bustle, and *you* love ————.

MAG. Hush! Mamma, hush! there is but one person in his world who knows what I love. (*aside.*) Oh, Parker!—dear Parker! I wish I was at home with you—particularly as they are all out. (*Turns up the Stage.*)

MRS. TEMP. Strange boy!—I can't guess what has happened to him of late. (*aloud.*) Well, my dear friends, what say you to this place?—Is it not charming?

GRACE, BEAUCHAMP, *and* BATCHELOR, *come forward.*

GRACE. I'm quite delighted with it—and you, Mr. Beauchamp? (*Looking tenderly at him.*)

BEAU. (*Rather confused.*) Equally fascinated, I assure you.

MRS. TEMP. Well, but there are many delights we have not yet tasted.

BATCH. Oh! yes,—there are the medicinal waters. Perhaps you would like to taste *them?*

MRS. TEMP. Brother! Come, will you like to dance a quadrille upon the grass-plot here? It's quite the fashion.

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GRACE. (*Looking at* BEAUCHAMP.) I should like it much; but our party is not numerous enough.

MRS. TEMP. Brother Batchelor, I declare you must dance with me.

BATCH. Sister Templeton, don't be a noodle.

MRS. TEMP. Think how it will please the dear boys.

BATCH. Please your grandmother. (*Exit* R. H.)

MRS. TEMP. I am going to leave you two to take care of one another while the children and I inquire if Miss Grantley has arrived. Adieu for the present. Come, loves. (HECTOR *rushes to her.*) Gently, Hector, gently,—Magnus!

MAG. Mamma! (*Goes to her.*)

MRS. TEMP. (*Gazing at him.*) Mild, modest, interesting child. (*Exeunt* MRS. T., MAGNUS, *and* HECTOR, L. H. U. E.)

BEAUCHAMP *and* GRACE *seem embarrassed.*

GRACE. (Aside.) What *shall* I do to fix his attention? I can make nothing of him.

BEAU. (Aside.) If I could only bring myself to disclose my love for Caroline to *her*—perhaps *she* might—I will— (*aloud.*) Will you permit me?

GRACE. (*Speaking at the same time.*) By the bye.

(*they both pause.*)

BEAU. Madam.

GRACE. Sir.

BEAU. I beg your pardon.

GRACE. Pray, go on.

BEAU. Nay, excuse me.

GRACE. (Aside.) Then I'll see if I can prepare Caroline's road for her. (*aloud*) Mr. Beauchamp.

BEAU. Ma'am.

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GRACE. Excuse the abruptness of my question. I am an awkward country girl; but the subject I am about to speak of, is one in which I am deeply—most deeply—interested.

BEAU. I shall be proud to answer, without reserve, any question with which Miss Ormonde may be pleased to honour me. *(Going close to her.)*

GRACE. *(After a pause.)* Were you ever in love?

BEAU. *(Starting back.)* Ma'am! *(Aside)* This question—so pointed—"deeply interested"—I do believe she has fallen in love with me. Oh! I must speak to her about Caroline at once.

GRACE. You promised to answer me without reserve.

BEAU. *(Aside.)* Poor dear girl, my heart bleeds for her. *(Aloud.)* Madam, I *have been* in love.

GRACE. And are so *still?*

BEAU. Why, yes. *(Aside.)* Oh! this is terrible; but the truth must out,—honour—*honour* demands it. *(Aloud.)* Madam, I *am* in love—fondly, madly in love; but, I regret to say, the object is not precisely the one to which I have reason to believe your wishes point.

GRACE. *(Aside.)* What on earth does he mean? *(Aloud and with anxiety.) Not* the one to whom my wishes point?

BEAU. *(Aside.)* It is as I thought. *(Aloud.)* No, madam. Little did I think, even two hours ago, that I should ever be bold enough to make such a declaration to you; but timid as I know I am by nature, my heart, for once, is on my lips, and my feelings must have vent. Madam, the future happiness of my life is in *your* hands.

GRACE. *(Aside.)* I do believe he has fallen in love with me. *(aloud.)* Mr. Beauchamp, setting aside a *lady's* feelings upon such an occasion, there is another gentleman——

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BEAU. (*Much moved.*) Another gentleman?

GRACE. Even so, sir.

BEAU. Oh, madam—in pity, name him.

GRACE. Nay, sir, you must excuse me there,—I think I have said enough.

BEAU. Enough to goad me into madness.—

(*Re-enter* MRS. TEMPLETON *and* HECTOR.)

I see before me a prospect the most frightful.

MRS. TEMP. (*Advancing.*) Well, I declare, if you call that prospect frightful, you must be a most unreasonable man.

HEC. (*Coming forward.*) I say Ma—do let us have a dance—I declare it's too bad not to have one when there's such a nice band.

MRS. TEMP. Presently, love, presently.

HEC. See, it's just going to play. (*Music*—HECTOR *dances.*)

(R. H., *Enter* MAGNUS—*Music ceases.*)

MAG. (*To* HECTOR, *who continues dancing.*) Be quiet, Hector, with your nonsensical capering. (HECTOR *stops.*)

HEC. What's the matter now?

MAG. Be quiet, I tell you—Oh, mamma, who do you think is coming?

MRS. TEMP. Miss Grantley?

MAG. No, mamma; the minstrel—(*Guitar sounds*)—I've just heard him sing such a beautiful song—(*Aside*) all about love. (BEAUCHAMP *has taken hold of* GRACE'S *hand, and appears to be in earnest conversation with her.*)

(*Enter* CAROLINE *disguised as the minstrel.*)

CAR. (*Aside.*) Now to commence operations—I trust they wont know me—I have conversed with one of the dear

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babes, and he hadn't a guess of me. I wonder how Grace gets on with my shy lover. (*Turns and observes the situation of* GRACE *and* BEAUCHAMP.) Hey day—What's this? Shy did I say? Come, come, Miss Grace, you are acting your part rather too well. (*Coughs aloud, and strikes a chord or two on the guitar—they all turn.*)

GRACE. See—here *is* the minstrel—I'll speak to him—(*Crosses to* CAROLINE, *and aside to her*)—Excellent! excellent! You have indeed made the most of your time.

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) And so have you, Miss, I think.

GRACE. (*Aside to her*) "Miss?" What's the matter with you?

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) Don't ask *me*—you know that all is not right.

GRACE. (*Aside to her.*) I know—I know—but fear nothing—all *will* be right—sing.

CAR. (*Aside to her.*) I can't—if I try to sing I shall cry.

GRACE. (*Aside to her.*) Nonsense, I tell you—sing directly—you mustn't cry. If you call yourself a man, behave like one. (*Returns to* BEAUCHAMP.)

CAR. (*Aside.*) I'll never be a man again, if I'm not to cry when I know it would do me good.

MRS. TEMP. Well, Miss Ormonde, what's your report? Are we to have a song from this person?

GRACE. Oh yes. Mr. Beauchamp, you would like to hear a song,—wouldn't you?

BEAU. By all means, if you wish it—otherwise I'll give him half-a-crown and send him about his business.

GRACE. He'll accept your half-crown, but he must sing for it.

BEAU. As you please.

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GRACE. Come then, choose a song.

BEAU. Nay, I leave that to you.

GRACE. And I'll leave it to the young gentleman, Mr. Magnus.

MRS. TEMP. Master Magnus, my dear, if you please.

GRACE. Well then, Master Magnus, will you choose a subject?

MAG. (*Earnestly.*) *Love.*

MRS. TEMP. Silly, but fascinating child!

GRACE. Nay, the choice was allowed him. Master Hector!

HEC. (*Capering down to her.*) Yes, Miss.

GRACE. *You* may fix on the song.

HEC. Thank you, Miss—(*Going to* CAROLINE—*pauses*) —stop, it's to be about love, is'nt it?

GRACE. Yes.

HEC. That's all right—(*running to* CAROLINE) I say, old man—

CAR. Sir.

HEC. Can you sing Giles Scroggins courted Molly Brown?

CAR. It is not exactly in my style, sir.

MAG. (*To Hector.*) Contemptible noodle!

HEC. (*To Magnus.*) You be hanged.

MRS. TEMP. Boys, repress these ecstacies.

(*Goes up with Boys.*)

BEAU. I must assist you, I see. (*Crossing to* CAROLINE) My good friend.

CAR. Sir—(*Begins to courtsey, but recovers herself and bows.*)

BEAU. (*Turning to* GRACE.) The fellow is frightened at me, I declare. Did you observe his awkwardness?

GRACE. Yes—but take no notice of it.

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BEAU. (*To* CAROLINE.) Don't be alarmed at me—you have been accustomed to sing in public, I believe?

CAR. Yes, sir.

BEAU. And with much applause, they tell me?

CAR. The public are very good to me, sir.

BEAU. Come then—the subject is to be love—oblige us with a song.

CAR. I know a Tyrolese air, sir.

BEAU. Good—and the subject is?—

CAR. Perhaps it wont interest you, sir; it's only about a young peasant who was in love, and hadn't courage to declare himself.

BEAU. (*Much moved.*) Aye—but it will interest me deeply—sing it, friend.

SONG.—CAROLINE.

By the margin of fair Zurich's waters
Dwelt a youth, whose fond heart, night and day,
For the fairest of fair Zurich's daughters
In a dream of love melted away:
If alone, no one bolder than he;
But with her none more timid could be,—
"O list to me, fair one, I pray:"
When she did so, he only could say,
Ai, a, &c., alack! well-a-day,
Ai, a, &c. was all he could say.

By the margin of fair Zurich's waters,
At close of a sweet summer day,
To the fairest of fair Zurich's daughters
The youth found at last tongue to say,
"I'm in love, as thou surely must see,—
Could I love any other but thee?
Oh! say, then, wilt thou be my bride?"
Can you tell how the fair one replied?
Ai, a, &c., I leave you to guess,
Ai, a, &c., of course she said, Yes.

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MRS. TEMP. Bravo! bravo! charming, I declare—is'nt it, Hector?

HEC. It's all very well—but I should have liked Giles Scroggins better.

MRS. TEMP. That boy's comic humour breaks out upon every occasion. Magnus!

MAG. Yes, mamma.

MRS. TEMP. You seem quite lost in it.

MAG. O! it was beautiful! I could stand here and hear him sing till all's blue again.

MRS. TEMP. Delicious sensibility!

(BEAUCHAMP *has appeared lost in thought*—GRACE *and* CAROLINE *have observed him, and exchanged looks.*)

Come—shall we take a turn round the garden?

BEAU. (*Recovering himself.*) As you please. Allow me—(*gives an arm to* GRACE). Permit me—(*gives the other to* MRS. TEMPLETON.) (*They turn up the stage.*)

CAR. (*Aside.*) The wretch is marching off without saying a word.

BEAU. (*Leaving them.*) Excuse me for one moment.

(*Exeunt all but* CAROLINE *and* BEAUCHAMP.)

(*Approaching* CAROLINE, *and taking out his purse.*) My good friend, your song affected me, and I forgot my promise of rewarding you.

CAR. Money is not my object, sir.

BEAU. No, no; but still you must allow me—

CAR. There's a difference between *ob*-ject, and ob*ject*, sir.

BEAU. Ah—humourous as well as musical—what am I in your debt?

CAR. The gift is always voluntary, sir—but you will distress me if you make it more than half-a-crown.

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BEAU. There then—(*gives half-a-crown*—CAROLINE *takes off her hat and bows*)—and now tell me—whose words are those? (GRACE *appears at the back, watching.*)

CAR. My own, sir.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) I can't account for my sensations. (*Aloud*)—I could almost swear that I have heard you sing before—where can it have been?

CAR. (*Significantly.*) Have you ever been at Richmond, sir?

BEAU. At Richmond? To be sure I have. (*Aside*) Celestial Richmond! Was it not there that Caroline and I first met? (*Aloud and eagerly.*) How long is it since you were in Yorkshire?

CAR. (*Carelessly.*) I meant Richmond in Surrey, sir.

BEAU. Hang Richmond in Surrey—I want to know—

CAR. Excuse me, sir; I shall have the honour to see you again in the course of the day.

(*Takes off her hat, bows, and is about to go.*)

BEAU. Stay, stay; I insist on it. (CAROLINE *goes off* R. H. *singing the burthen of her song.*) Nay then—(*running across the stage after her*—GRACE *comes forward and intercepts him.*)

GRACE. Are you going to run away from me?

BEAU. A moment only. (*Looking after* CAROLINE.)

GRACE. We are all waiting for you, and I cannot suffer you to go. (*Aside.*) A pretty sort of a lover this—to declare himself one moment, and want to be off the next.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) This girl's sudden passion for me is the most unlucky, the most *inconvenient* thing I ever met with.

(KILDARE *appears in the back ground.*)

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KIL. (*Aside.*) There she is—there's my own little pocket Venus by all that's delightful.

BEAU. (*Aloud and earnestly.*) Miss Ormonde, hear me—

KIL. (*Stepping back.*) Hollo! I must try and listen—perhaps this gentleman's throat will want a little cutting.

GRACE. (*Who has been anxiously watching* CAROLINE'S *escape.*) Well, sir.

BEAU. Miss Ormonde, I have a strange misgiving; I feel as if I had been deceived, and yet I know not how.

GRACE. I trust you don't accuse me of deceiving you.

BEAU. Such is the impression you have made upon me, that I am most unwilling to think so; but that minstrel—the song he sung—the tones of his voice—

GRACE. (*Interrupting.*) Allow me to assure you that I am incapable of taking part in *any* deception calculated to annoy or distress you.

BEAU. (*Approaching her*—KILDARE *comes down the stage.*) Forgive my momentary—my unjust suspicions. (*Takes her hand, and is about to kiss it, when* KILDARE *puts his head between them, and takes* GRACE'S *hand in his own;* GRACE *screams;* BEAUCHAMP *starts back.*)

KIL. Perhaps you could spare me the least taste in life of this hand, sir, as it happens to belong to me?

BEAU. To you, sir? (*Aside.*) What *can* this mean? (*Turns up the stage.*)

GRACE. Oh, Maurice, how could you frighten one so? I thought you were at Coventry.

KIL. I dare say you did, my dear; but I happened to get my leave of absence a week sooner than I expected—followed you to town—learned you were here—galloped after

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you—and have now the honour to report myself just in time, it seems, to relieve this gentleman from doing *my* duty at *your* head-quarters.

GRACE. I declare you flurried me so, that I forgot what I was about.

KIL. (*Aside.*) By the powers! I wish *I* could forget what you were about.

GRACE. Allow me—Mr. Sydney Beauchamp—Captain Kil—

KIL. (*Interrupting.*) Oh, don't trouble yourself—this gentleman and I have a little matter of business to settle, and we'll get acquainted with one another in two minutes.

GRACE. (*Taking* KILDARE *aside.*) Come hither, Maurice—you're never going to be so silly as to—

KIL. As to—*what?*

GRACE. Come, come; I know your meaning: but indeed you're wrong—you're under a false impression—I can explain—every body can explain—I'll fetch them. (*Going.*)

KIL. What need to trouble every body, when one will do?

GRACE. How provoking you are! but I know what to do. Remain quietly here for three minutes, and you shall have ample satisfaction. (*Exit hastily,* R.H.)

KIL. (*Aside.*) Satisfaction! by my soul, but you've hit the identical word! (*Aloud.*) We had better make the best of our time, sir—three minutes, you hear, is all that is allowed us.

BEAU. For what purpose, sir?

KIL. To settle.

BEAU. I fear I am very dull. What can we have to settle?

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KIL. I beg your pardon; but I didn't quite catch your name just now.

BEAU. My name, sir, is Sydney Beauchamp.

KIL. I have to apologize again—but my memory is an indifferent one—have you got such a thing as a card about you?

BEAU. (*Aside, and taking out card-case.*) This is very strange; but he seems to be a friend of Miss Ormonde. (*Giving card.*) There, sir.

KIL. Sir, you're greatly obliging—exchange is no robbery. (*Gives his own card.*) (*Louder.*) And now, sir, I presume you understand me?

BEAU. Perfectly; a challenge. Is it too great a liberty for me to ask upon what grounds?

KIL. And if it *is* too great a liberty, I should say, from what I saw a-while ago, that you are just the man to take it.

BEAU. I really must beg you to explain.

KIL. (*Aside*) Beg me to explain! By the powers, but that's a capital joke. (*Aloud, and going close to him.*) Sir, when a gentleman does you the honour to call upon you to fight him, and waives *his* right to an explanation, good manners would naturally point out to you that the least you can do is to return the compliment.

BEAU. If you have taken offence at my being here with Miss Ormonde, the matter is explained in a moment.

KIL. Sir, I should be sorry to give you unnecessary *trouble*. Your behaviour to Miss Ormonde is so *mysterious*, that it explains itself. Name your friend.

BEAU. At the present moment I have no friend.

KIL. (*Aside.*) He says he's got no friend; does he mean

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me to kick him? (*Aloud.*) I presume, sir, you'll be able to provide yourself with one by the morning. At all events, my friend will be proud to render you any assistance.

BEAU. Sir, you're very polite. I am, indeed, a novice in such affairs; but if you or your friend will explain to me what is necessary, I will cheerfully attend your summons, and shoot you, as well as I can, in any way you like best. (*Bows.*)

KIL. Sir, your readiness does you honour. (*Aside.*) But I hate such confounded apathetic devils—he don't seem to take the least interest in it.

BEAU. I have other things to attend to, sir. May I consider this as concluded?

KIL. Until to-morrow, certainly. (*Going.*)

(BEAUCHAMP *takes off his hat.*)

KIL. (*Taking off his hat.*) Sir, your most obedient. (*Aside.*) I'll teach him to make his anonymous love to my property. (*Exit.*)

BEAU. This is supposed to be a party of pleasure. I have been down here an hour—I can see nothing of Caroline—her friend has fallen in love with me—and her friend's friend proposes to shoot me to-morrow morning. Well, we must take the world as we find it. I wonder where that minstrel is gone to?

(R. H. *Enter* JAMES, *with a napkin in his hand.*) Waiter!

JAMES. Sir.

BEAU. Has that minstrel been here before?

JAMES. That minstrel, sir—which?

BEAU. There is but one.

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JAMES. True, sir. (*Aside.*) Gad! I almost forgot. (*Aloud.*) Coming, coming.

BEAU. Stay here.

JAMES. Somebody's calling, sir.

BEAU. Stay here, I tell you. Do you know him?

JAMES. Know him, sir?

BEAU. Don't repeat my words, but answer my question.

JAMES. Question, sir?

BEAU. Look you, friend; I thought there was some mystery, and your manner confirms it.

JAMES. Confirms it, sir?

BEAU. I request you again not to repeat my words; but I am not angry with you—I appeal to your feelings—I throw myself upon your generosity. What's your name?

JAMES. James, sir.

BEAU. James, have you ever been in love?

JAMES. (*Looking at his figure.*) Not very lately, sir.

BEAU. Still, if you are an intelligent waiter, you will understand me. Who is that minstrel?

JAMES. I can't tell you that, sir; I can't indeed.

BEAU. Nay, indeed you must.

JAMES. Unpossible, sir; I promised her not.

BEAU. Her!

JAMES. (*Aside.*) Oh, murder! I've let it out. (*Aloud.*) Yes, sir; she gave me half-a-sovereign.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) A female,—then I must know more.

JAMES. (*Aside.*) Must you? (*Aloud*) Sir, I throw myself upon your generosity.

BEAU. Fear nothing; I wont betray you.

JAMES. No, sir; but I throw myself upon your generosity. (*Looking towards his pocket.*)

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BEAU. Fear nothing, I tell you.

JAMES. No, sir; but you don't understand me. I throw myself upon your generosity. (*Pointing to his pocket.*)

BEAU. Pshaw! I was dull indeed; there. (*Gives half-a-sovereign.*)

JAMES. I beg pardon, sir; you'll excuse me, but this is the same sum as we had from the lady.

BEAU. There, then. (*Giving more money.*) And now, who is she?

JAMES. (*Putting the money into his pocket.*) Ah, that I can't tell you, sir.

BEAU. How?

JAMES. All I know is, that she came here before your party—had some private talk with master and mistress—and the real minstrel put on a dress which she brought with her, and gave us waiters half-a-sovereign not to blab, which I never should have thought of doing, only you know, sir, one's duty to one's *sovereign* overcomes every thing.

BEAU. There, go now, and leave me.

JAMES. Certainly, sir. (*Going.*) I say, sir, you wont tell the lady what I have done?

BEAU. No, I will not.

JAMES. Thank you, sir. (*Aside, and taking out his money.*) And, in return, I wont tell the other waiters what *you* have done. (*Exit* R. H.)

BEAU. How blind have I been not to know that dear but giddy girl at once—but now I see it all. Yes, yes, dear Caroline; farewell to bashfulness. I'll follow you at once, and you shall be mine for ever. (*Going.*)

(*During this speech, the Minstrel has appeared at the back of the stage, carrying his guitar on his*

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shoulder. He seems looking about for company. Having arrived at the centre of the stage, still keeping his face from the audience, and taken his guitar in his hand at the words, "for ever," he strikes a chord or two.)

Ah! again? Be still, my agitated heart—the most important moment of my life has arrived.

(*After an effort, turns, and is going towards him.*)

(*The Minstrel plays again.*)

Yet stay—she is about to sing—once again let me pause, and listen to that enchanting voice.

(*The Minstrel sings a few bars.*)

(*In astonishment.*) What altered tones are these? She must be ill. (*Going nearer to him, and, in a tremulous voice,*) Caroline! (*No answer.*)

(*Going close to him, and putting his hand gently on his arm.*)

Caroline!

MINSTREL. (*Turning sharply round.*) Sir!

BEAU. (*Dragging him forward.*) Why, you are not Caroline.

MINSTREL. Caroline! no, sir; my name is Leander.

BEAU. Confusion! Leander! I wish you were at the bottom of the Hellespont.

MINSTREL. The gentleman seems rather mad—and so I shall leave him. (*Exit* L. H.)

BEAU. Foiled again! (*Going off* R. H., *is met by* CAROLINE, *disguised as a Gipsy.*)

CAR. Long life and a happy marriage to you, noble gentleman! Listen to the gipsy girl—it will do you no harm—let me tell your fortune, good gentleman.

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BEAU. No, no; don't tease me. (*Going off in opposite direction, is met by* PARKER, *disguised as a Gipsy.*)

PARK. Long life and a happy marriage to you, noble gentleman. Listen to the gipsy girl—it will do you no harm—let me tell your fortune, good gentleman.

BEAU. Another!

CAR. (*Following him up.*) Let me tell your fortune. I can tell it by the stars, or by the cards, or by your own good-looking hand.

BEAU. I dare say; but I'm in a hurry. I have no time.

CAR. You *have* time.

BEAU. Indeed! Perhaps you know more of my affairs than *I* do?

CAR. I know your present state as well—your future chances better.

BEAU. (*Aside.*) Why does this poor creature interest me? (*Aloud.*) Convince me that you know the present, and I may consent to hear your notions of the future.

CAR. Shew me your hand. (*He puts out his hand; she examines it.*) How plain these lines are!—I can look upon this hand, and almost fancy it my own.—Just *here* is a lady whom it seems you love,—although at this moment a *dark shade* is over her face. You make her think you are devoted to her, yet perplex her with uncertainty—it is evident you are what people call bashful or shy.

BEAU. Bashful! how know you that?

CAR. By twenty different signs—I see her carriage at the door—she comes down stairs—her foot is on the step—you should be there to hand her in—yet I see you not—yes; now a shadow cast upon the wall shews you are yet upon the landing place—the shadow advances—recedes—advances—recedes

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again—and she gets into the carriage by herself.—Good gentleman—

BEAU. (*Aside.*) How often has this very thing occurred! (*Aloud.*) Go on—the future—the future.

CAR. Nay, good gentleman—I must be paid for that.—Come, cross your hand with a bit of silver.

BEAU. (*Putting a half-crown into her hand.*) There—then.

CAR. (*Aside.*) Another half-crown—I shall make a good day of it. (*Aloud, and taking his hand.*) There is much happiness in store for you, good gentleman—and crossed only by lines which assume a figure like your own.—You stand in your own light, good gentleman.

BEAU. My own light—ah! I'll hesitate no longer—I'll seek her; yet I know not where she is.

CAR. She is nearer to you than you imagine.

(*Re-enter* PARKER.)

BEAU. (*Breaking from her.*) Yet one painful doubt oppresses me. Her property is much greater than mine, and she may think me interested.

CAR. (*Earnestly, and in her own voice.*) Can you think so meanly of one whom you profess to love? Learn to know her better—above all, learn to conceal this cruel doubt from her, or you may chance to lose her for ever.

BEAU. (*Struck with the alteration in her voice and manner.*) What do I hear? Can I have been deceived again? Surely those tones—and yet even now I dread to turn and meet conviction. (*Caroline beckons Parker across.*)

CAR. (*Aside to* PARKER.) I've gone too far—quick!—take my place.

(PARKER *places herself where* CAROLINE *was.* CAROLINE *escapes,* R. H.)

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BEAU. It must—it *shall* be done. (*Tenderly.*) Caroline! (*Turns and encounters* PARKER'S *face*—PARKER *courtseys.*) Confusion! Which way is that lady gone?

PAR. What Mrs. Cooper the gipsy, sir?

BEAU. No, no; yes, yes; I mean the person that was here.

PAR. Oh, *that* way sir, (*pointing to opposite side.*)

BEAU. Are you sure? (*Crossing.*)

PAR. We never deceive any body, sir.

(*Exit* BEAUCHAMP *hastily,* L. H.)

CAR. (*Looking on.*) Is he gone?

PAR. Yes, Miss.

CAR. Then come this way with me.

(*Exeunt* CAROLINE *and* PARKER, R.H.)

(*Enter* MAGNUS, *thoughtfully.*)

MAG. What's the use of bringing me down here to enjoy myself, when I'm as uncomfortable as ever I can be? And why am I uncomfortable? Aye—that's the fatal secret. There is but one person in the world who knows why I am uncomfortable. If mamma knew I was in love, there'd be a precious row; but then she doesn't. I shouldn't have known it myself if it hadn't been for that story book that Parker lent me. And after all, what should Mamma be angry about? Gentlemen *have* married maid-servants before to-day; the book proves that. I'm sure when Parker is drest to go out in the carriage she looks as much of a lady as the best of 'em; and as to her being a little older than

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I am—why I don't know a great deal of the world, and she'll be the better able to take care of me.

(*Enter* PARKER.)

PAR. (*Aside.*) There's one of my little beaux—so I shall beg leave to transact a little business on my own account.

(*Meets and courtseys to* MAGNUS *as he turns.*)

MAG. Holloah! who the dickens are you?

PAR. Kind gentleman, dont be frightened at the poor gipsy girl?

MAG. What?—a gipsy? Keep off. I've read about you in story books; and you're all very wicked.

PAR. Kind gentleman! dont believe the story books—there's nothing but stories in 'em. (*approaching him.*)

MAG. Keep off, I tell you. I know what you do—you make your broth with other people's fowls.

PAR. Oh, no.

MAG. I say you do; and then you steal gentlemen's and ladies' shirts off the hedges.

PAR. No, no.

MAG. But I say you do—you nasty black looking creatures; and then you kidnap one, and rub one's face over with walnut pickle, till one's own mother dont know one.

PAR. Let me tell your fortune.

MAG. No that you sha'nt. (PARKER *approaches him.*) Dont come here—help! help! (HECTOR *runs in.*)

HEC. Holloah! Magnus—what's the row?

PAR. (*Aside.*) I didn't want the other here yet.

(PARKER *turns and faces him.*)

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HEC. You queer-looking devil! What do you call yourself?

PAR. Fie! young gentleman, dont use naughty words—I'm only a gipsy.

HEC. Oh, I know now; I've got a picture of you in a book. I say, come here, old girl. Can you tell fortunes?

PAR. To be sure, I can. Open your right hand—cross it with a bit of silver—and I'll tell you all that's to happen to you.

HEC. Come along, then.

MAG. Dont be a fool, Hector; take care what you're about; or just in the middle of it you'll find yourself flying through the air on a broomstick.

HEC. Oh, pack of stuff! Come along, old girl.

(*Puts money into her hand.*)

MAG. If you do, now, I'll be off and tell mamma; and I wish I may find you when I come back.

HEC. If you think there's any danger, you might stop and stand by one—she can't have got a broomstick strong enough to carry two.

PAR. Never mind; let him go; and then he wont hear what I could tell him about his sweetheart, and when he's to be married.

MAG. What do you know about that?

PAR. Cross your hand with a bit of silver, and I'll tell you.

MAG. Dashed if I like it much, but here goes.

(*Puts silver into her hand.*)

PAR. (*looking first at the hand of one, and then of the other.*) Brothers—I declare!

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MAG. (*Aside.*) How the deuce does she know that?

PAR. Old enough to be your own masters, although you are made to dress like boys.

MAG. (*Aside.*) Downright conjuring.

HEC. Come—get on.

PAR. You have been kept back, and not allowed to see the world, by somebody whose name begins with a great cross M.

MAG. & HEC. (*After looking at one another.*) Mamma, as sure as a gun.

PAR. The first that is married will be the first to get free from his mother's apron-string.

MAG. (*Aside.*) That will be me.

HEC. (*Aside.*) I know which that will be.

PAR. You are both in love—(MAG. *and* HEC. *stare at each other.*)

MAG. Both? (*aside.*) Who the plague is Hector in love with?

HEC. Both? (*aside.*) Who the plague is Magnus in love with?

PAR. You must collect all you can, and be ready to run away to Gretna Green.

MAG. How shall we know when?

PAR. Your sweetheart will take care to inform you.

HEC. I'll bet you a shilling you don't know my sweetheart's name.

PAR. You would lose—her name begins with a P.

MAG. (*Aside.*) a P, how extremely odd!—(*aloud.*) and mine?

PAR. With a P also.

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HEC. (*Aside.*) That's the rummest go of all.

Enter at back MRS. TEMP.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) where can these babes have run to I wonder? Why there they are I declare—and having their fortunes told by one of those abominable gypsies—(*advancing.*) I'll soon put a stop—(*Pausing.*) but stay, I'll listen—it may develope some new point in their dispositions.

PAR. The person you are in love with *seems* to be beneath you in rank—but when you've married her she'll turn out to be a lady.

MRS. TEMP. What's this I hear—*love*?

PAR. One word more—you must both be cautious—this cross crabbed M will work against you in everything you wish.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) The wretch!

MAG. (*Beckoning to* HEC. *and advancing.*) Hector.

HEC. (*Coming to him.*) Well—what is it?

MAG. Hector—I've got an extraordinary thought—answer me a question.

HEC. Tell me what it is first.

MAG. Answer me sir, I insist upon it.

HEC. Come—don't bully—I sha'nt answer if I don't like it.

MAG. Don't use vulgar language—but attend to your elder brother.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) Good child!

HEC. Fire away then—I'm in a hurry.

MAG. You are in love.

HEC. I know that.

MAG. Who are you in love with?

HEC. What's that to you?

MAG. Every thing—I am in love myself and I have a horrid uspicion that it's with the same individual. What is her name?

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HEC. Pudding and tame—if you ask me again I shall tell you the same.

MAG. (*Earnestly.*) Is it Parker?

HEC. Will you tell mamma?

MAG. No.

HEC. Honour?

MAG. Bright.

HEC. Yes it *is* Parker—now you've got it.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) Mad boy, in love with *my* maid!

MAG. You shall never marry her.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) Come, I've still *one* child in his senses.

HEC. Why not?

MAG. Because I mean to marry her myself.

MRS. TEMP. (*Aside.*) I'm petrified.

HEC. If you marry her, I'm a Dutchman.

MAG. Don't talk to me about Dutchmen.

HEC. Then I'll talk to you about an Englishman. I'm not going to stand any of your nonsense; and, if you interfere between me and Parker, I'll just punch your head.

(*Putting himself in a boxing attitude.*)

PARK. (*Coming forward.*) Gentlemen, gentlemen, you mustn't fight.

MAG. Stand aside, gipsy woman. (*aside.*) I never thought to strike my little brother; but my heart's of more consequence than his head. (*aloud.*) Come on.

(*Putting himself in a boxing attitude, and approaching* HECTOR.)

MRS. TEMP. *Advances between them, and takes hold of an ear of each.*

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MAG. *and* HEC. (*Calling out.*) Oh! — What's that? (*Looking up, and dropping their arms.*) Mamma!

MRS. TEMP. Yes, it is your mamma, you wicked children—you want to break her heart.

MAG. No, I don't; but he wants to break my head.

MAG. & HEC. But, mamma!

MRS. TEMP. Silence! And *you*, you wicked impostor, begone, or I'll have you taken before a magistrate, and sent to the tread-mill.

PARK. Don't be angry with the poor gipsy, ma'am. Let me tell your fortune; I'll tell it by the stars, or by the cards, or by your own good-looking hand.

MRS. TEMP. Begone! If I had a hand at liberty, I'd take you into custody myself. Begone, I say.

PARK. (*Aside.*) I wonder how Miss Grantley will like going to the tread-mill? (*Exit.*)

MRS. TEMP. I blush for you, children. If I had sent you to school, as every body advised me, you could'nt have turned out worse than you have. (*Pulling them to the side.*)

MAG. & HEC. But, mamma! (*Hanging back.*)

MRS. TEMP. Come away, both of you.

(*Exit, jerking them after her.*)

Enter BATCHELOR, R. U. E.

BATCH. Where the devil are they all? I've seen them bobbing about by ones and twos in every direction; but whenever they came near me, I hid amongst the trees. I must find them now, and hear what they've got to say about dinner. (*Exit at opposite side.*)

Enter GRACE, L. H. I. E.

GRACE. I can't find Caroline, and know not what has

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become of Beauchamp and my hasty lover. Oh dear! oh dear! how will this day of pleasure end?

(*Exit on opposite side.*)

Enter KILDARE, R. H. U. E.

KIL. Where the devil is every body gone to? It's mighty lucky I took so much trouble to join this party of pleasure. Well, as I've missed every body to-day, the least Mr. Beauchamp can do, is to miss me in the morning, and then we'll be all right again. I must have another try to find 'em.

(*Exit at opposite side.*)

Enter BEAUCHAMP. L. H. U. E.

That gipsy has deceived me—she can't have passed that way—I shall know no moment's happiness until I find her—where—where—is my Caroline? (*Exit at opposite side.*)

Music.

Re-enter simultaneously at different points — GRACE, BATCHELOR, BEAUCHAMP, KILDARE, MRS. TEMPLETON *and* BOYS.

GRACE. Here they are at last!

BATCH. Now for some dinner!

BEAU. All here but Caroline!

KIL. A general muster, by the Powers!

MRS. TEMP. Will any body fine me a constable?

BEAU. Is there any thing the matter, Ma'am?

MRS. TEMP. Every thing is the matter, sir,—I want those gipsies taken up.

BEAU. Gipsies? Madam, I would give a hundred pounds to find them.

MRS. TEMP. Sir, it's a very liberal reward. (*Aloud.*) A

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hundred pounds is offered for the apprehension of two vagrant gipsies.

Enter CAROLINE *and* PARKER, R. H.

CAR. I claim it—and surrender them at discretion.

(*As they approach,* MRS. TEMP. *pulls the boys back.*)

MRS. TEMP. Come away from the nasty creatures.

BEAU. (*Approaching* CAROLINE.) Caroline, I know not how to thank you. Behold me at length cured of my folly, and ready to speak out.

CAR. (*Giving him her hand.*) If that's the case, I give you leave to hold your tongue.

KIL. Why, Grace.

GRACE. (*Interrupting him.*) Didn't I tell you it should all be explained to your satisfaction?

KIL. Upon my word, you did. The beam's removed from my eye, and I see it all. (*To* BEAUCHAMP.) Mr. Beauchamp, I've made a blunder, it seems; but I am not the first Irishman that's done that, and I wont be the last either, if I make another myself on purpose. Sir, I hold my hand towards you.

BEAU. Sir, I take it with pleasure.

KIL. And I hope you wont think the worse of it because it hasn't a pistol in it.

MRS. TEMP. That creature is—

PARK. (*Courtseying.*) Parker, Ma'am.

MRS. TEMP. You my maid Parker?

PARK. At your service, Ma'am.

MRS. TEMP. Never at *my* service again, be assured,—your shameful conduct.

CAR. Stay, Madam, I know all—I have been the unintentional cause of this. She shall trouble you no more.

HEC. Magnus!

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MAG. Hector!

HEC. We're both done.

MAG. No running away to Parsons' Green.

HEC. Not Parsons' Green—Gretna Green. (*They embrace.*)

MRS. TEMP. (*Separating them.*) Leave one another alone, you silly children; and embrace your mother, whose care and caution have saved you from destruction. My dear friends, think no more of this—children will be children. (*She embraces them both.*) My babes are mine again.

KIL. The party was a little at sixes and sevens, but it seems to have come all right at last—Grace!

GRACE. (*Giving him her hand.*) Maurice!

BEAU. Caroline!

CAR. (*Giving him her hand.*) Sydney?

MRS. TEMP. Magnus! (*he gives her his hand.*) Hector! (*he gives her his hand.*)

MAG. & HEC. Mamma!

MRS. TEMP. Brother!

BATCH. I want my dinner—(*Crossing and to Caroline*)—and as waiting for my dinner is just the one thing that annoys me, perhaps if you have any thing more to say, you'll be good enough to say it.

CAR. I will. (*advancing.*) How about my *own* fortune, good ladies and good gentlemen? I have tried it by the *stars* and by the *cards;* and now I want to tell it by your own good-looking hands. I needn't ask you to cross them with a bit of silver. You have *done* that—but be kind to the poor gipsy, and she will give you not only good luck but good advice. When you are in bad health or bad spirits, you will always find relief by coming to the Beulah Spa—(*Courtseying.*)—Good ladies and good gentlemen!

Printed by Harjette and Savill, 107, St. Martin's-lane, Charing Cross.

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11

MY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE;

A FARCE.

BY

ALFRED BUNN, ESQ.

AS FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN,

On MONDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 1833.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

(*Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.*)

1833.

[PRICE TENPENCE.]

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Somerton ..... *(an Artist)* .... MR. COOPER.
Mr. Timothy Brown (a City Broker) .. MR. MEADOWS.
Mr. Jonathan Smith .. *(a Tailor)* .... MR. BARTLEY.

Mrs. Somerton, *Mrs. Brown*, *Mrs. Smith* — *their respective Wives* — MISS TAYLOR, MISS KENNETH, MISS MURRAY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

A PREVIOUS introduction, both on the English and French stage, of some of the situations in this trifle, renders it unnecessary for me to say more to the numerous auditors who have honoured it with their hearty laughter, than that they are more indebted for their amusement to the excellence of the performance, than to any merit of mine.

A. B.

London, Oct. 7, 1833.

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MY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.

SCENE.

A chamber. At the first entrance O. P. is a window, and at the second entrance a door, leading to an inner apartment. At the first entrance P. S. is a small apartment, the inside of which is visible to the audience. It is entered by a side door, with a window over it—a centre door in the flats—on one side a painter's easel, with a picture on it—pistols crossed hang up against the wall, near the window—a table partly laid out—chairs—a buffet, surmounted by a looking-glass, containing plates, glasses, &c.—an open portmanteau, with a military uniform and cap in it—on a chair, a gun, near the portmanteau, and at some distance, in an armchair, is a dressing-gown and morning cap.

MRS. SOMERTON, MRS. BROWN, *and* MRS. SMITH *discovered.*

MRS. SOM. Well, my dears, say what you will, I repeat it again, Men are all monsters.

MRS. B. All—except Mr. Brown—

MRS. SM. And Mr. Smith.

MRS. SOM.—(*Aside*) Poor souls! if I were to tell them all. (*To them*)—Don't flatter yourselves too much; certainly I have every confidence in the affection and fidelity of *my* husband; but (*significantly*) when I see what is going on in other establishments, I tremble for fear Mr. Somerton

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should be as deceitful as the rest of the world; and notwithstanding appearances, I really would not swear to any thing.

MRS. SM. There I have the advantage over you, Mrs. Somerton; for I swear Mr. Smith is faithful to me—

MRS. BR. And I'll take my oath, Mr. Brown is faithful to me.

MRS. SOM. Really!

MRS. SM. I am not at all astonished at *your* being uneasy, my dear Mrs. Somerton, who have married a wild, giddy young man. It is not possible you could be otherwise; but Mr. Smith being a plain steady tradesman, of a steady age—

MRS. B. And Mr. Brown—a city broker—never out of his counting house, and one whose sole thoughts are on his business and his wife's happiness—he never does any thing without consulting me.

MRS. SOM. Really!

MRS. SM. Then Mr. Smith is as modest, timid, and reserved as a young girl, and would not dare to open his mouth without first asking my permission.

MRS. B. It is this which makes me love Mr. Brown.

MRS. SM. And me adore Mr. Smith.

MRS. B. *(To Mrs. Somerton.)* But your husband, my dear, is too giddy and dissipated.

MRS. SM. And not half reserved enough in his conversation.

MRS. B. And looking at all women with singular audacity. Oh, my dear Mrs. Somerton, really—

MRS. SOM. My worthy neighbours, you are too good by half; but I don't want—*(they rise)*—any one to be uneasy about me. I am very happy, believe me. I love my Somerton just as he is, with all his good qualities and all his fail-

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ings; I never grumble with the friends of my husband, and prefer that he should be polite and attentive to all who visit us—even to *you*, my dears!

BOTH. To us?

MRS. SOM. To be sure, for you know you are both very handsome.

BOTH. Oh!

MRS. SM. You are too kind.

MRS. SOM. Notwithstanding we are neighbours, you might be dangerous rivals. But I have no fear of you.

MRS. B. You have no reason.

MRS. SM. No, none.

MRS. SOM. Of course not; at the same time, I defy you, with all your charms and all your esprit, to make him inconstant; but, as friends and neighbours, I must speak very frankly to you, and tell you that instead of troubling yourselves so much about what is going on in *my* house, you should look a little more to your own. (*Aside*)—They wont easily get over that.

BOTH. In *ours*?

MRS. B. What can she mean?

MRS. SM. Why, my dear Mrs. Somerton, what are you thinking about?

MRS. SOM. Oh, nothing of any moment or certainty—I most sincerely wish your husbands may *always* be faithful to you—(*significantly*).

MRS. B. But, my dear Mrs. S., if you really know any thing, you ought to tell us.

MRS. SM. Pray speak out.

MRS. SOM. Oh, bless you, I know nothing—at least nothing positive, nothing more than—you know about *my* husband.

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therefore, my dear good people, suppose we change the subject.—What are you both going to do to-night?

MRS. B. Oh, I'm going home, to be sure!

MRS. SM. So am I.

MRS. SOM. And I shall sup with Mr. Somerton—*(goes up to table R.)*

MRS. B. And I with my dear Timothy.

MRS. SM. And I with my beloved Jonathan.

MRS. SOM. Well, a good appetite, and a good supper.

(Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith are about to go, when Mrs. Somerton stops them.)

But, I say—suppose by any chance your husbands should not come home?

MRS. B. *(Vehemently)* What?

MRS. SM. *(Confidently)* That is quite impossible—*(going.)*

MRS. SOM. Well—I only said "suppose;" and if they do not, you will each find a knife and fork ready for you here.

MRS. B. You are very kind.

MRS. SM. But don't make yourself uneasy, we shall have no reason to do that.

MRS. SOM. I hope not; however, you will find a hearty welcome, for I bear you no grudge, you see, for your attacks upon poor Somerton's fidelity.

MRS. B. Oh, it is all nothing but neighbours' gossip. Adieu.

MRS. SM. Good night, my dear.

MRS. SOM. Good bye, and don't forget; here's a plate for you, if you like to come back.

MRS. B. Ha! ha!—*(aside, as going out)*—Poor thing! she knows her husband is gone out gallavanting.

(Exeunt through door in Flat.)

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MRS. SOM. There they go, a couple of poor silly dupes; I've put them in a bit of a fume, however; and it serves them right for coming and abusing my husband to my face. Thank Fortune, I'm not at all jealous, but I should like to revenge myself on these worthy people for trying to *make* me so; and there could not be a better opportunity, for these two identical husbands have each written me a love letter. Now, the idea of two such fellows, with two such names as Jonathan Smith and Timothy Brown—the one a stock-broker of five-and-thirty, the other a tailor of forty—daring to write billet-doux to their neighbour's wife, is quite provocation enough. My husband is gone out to dinner, and was to have gone to the city ball afterwards, but I begged him to come home at eight to a minute; and, that we may keep the jest among ourselves, and not be the talk of the city, I have prudently given the servants a holiday, so that when Charles comes back, I must let him in myself, and I hope I shall be better able to answer than my neighbours for conjugal punctuality—(*a knocking heard*)—There he is, I'm sure—(*runs off at C. door, opens it, and advances with him.*)

SOM. My dear, why did you open the door yourself—where are the servants?

MRS. SOM. Never mind, they are all out.

SOM. All out?

MRS. SOM. Yes, yes; but thank you, my dear Charles, for coming home thus in good time.

SOM. It was your wish, my Caroline, and that was quite enough for me to obey it; but—

MRS. SOM. But—but—I hope it has not put you out of your way.

SOM. Not at all, my dear; but I should, notwithstanding,

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like to know why you have pressed me so urgently not to go to this ball, and to come home exactly at eight.

MRS. SOM. You must first of all promise me faithfully, that you will not fly in a passion with me, or be angry with any one else; but have a hearty laugh at what I'm going to tell you.

SOM. That's as it may happen.

MRS. SOM. And that if you are determined to have revenge upon any one, you'll let me have the management of it.

SOM. I don't much like this opening.

MRS. SOM. Well, you promise me all this?

SOM. Well, well, I will.

MRS. SOM. Agreed then—(*taking a letter out of one of the pockets of her apron*) read that letter (*giving it to Somerton*).

SOM. (*Reading the letter*) "Adorable Caroline,"—what!—who is this impudent scoundrel?

MRS. SOM. You forget your promise, Charles, and are in a passion already—come, read on.

SOM. (*Reading*) "Adorable Caroline,—Your derision and cruelty have preyed upon my heart, and caused it the deepest anguish. I am most anxious to tell you all I feel before I fly from you for ever, and as your husband is going this evening to the city ball, grant me the delightful favour of an interview. If I do not receive an answer from you, I will be under your window a little after eight, and will clap my hands three times as a signal, to let you know I am there; when I hope you will not refuse to receive the last farewell of your disconsolate—Timothy." Timothy! What! Timothy Brown, the broker, my next door neighbour?

MRS. SOM. The very man!

SOM. Why, the impudent vagabond—with his mild man-

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pers and placid countenance! But there is no trusting to appearances.

MRS. SOM. But this is not all, my dear Charles. Read this! (*Taking another letter out of the other pocket, and giving it him.*)

SOM. Another?

MRS. SOM. Yes: but pray make haste and read.

SOM. (*Reading.*) "Incomparable and inexorable beauty! I am above all duplicity, and prefer candidly and at once opening my heart, rather than adopting any circuitous method. Since I first knew you I have almost ceased to know myself, and my heart will break unless I can relieve it by a personal confession: I, therefore, implore you to grant me an interview. I understand your husband is going to the city ball to-night. About a quarter after eight, you will hear under your window the sound of my flute, and if you will only deign to open it, it will convince me you are not inflexible. I shall bring with me some nice things for a quiet supper, which I have expressly ordered from Birch's, as a slight proof of the devotion of your attached Jonathan." What! That damn'd tailor, my other next door neighbour. Why, the tailor is even more impudent than the broker.

MRS. SOM. Now, is it not much better to laugh at these coxcombs, than to fly in a passion with them?

SOM. But what do you propose?

MRS. SOM. First of all, that you go out.

SOM. What! Go out?

MRS. SOM. That is indispensable: and as soon as you are gone I will receive them.

SOM. But you must explain.

MRS. SOM. I shall receive them, and then—

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SOM. And then! What then?

MRS. SOM. *(Taking up a book from the buffet and giving it to Somerton.)* Here, take this volume, it is La Fontaine, and at the bottom of this page (*pointing with her finger*) you will read all I want you to do.

SOM. (*Glancing over it.*) Oh, I understand,—I take, and will follow implicitly your instructions.

MRS. SOM. It's settled then.

SOM. Quite. (*Three claps of the hand are heard.*) That's the broker to a certainty.

MRS. SOM. And to his time.

SOM. Then I'll slip down the back stair-case. (*Somerton goes out at the door.*)

MRS. SOM. Now then to receive my beau—but I must first set myself all in apple-pie order (*going to the glass*), for notwithstanding we despise people, we ought always to appear before them to the best advantage (*arranging herself before the glass, and speaking*). Mrs. Somerton, I think you are looking very well to-night (*a knock at the door.*) I'm coming. There's nothing like keeping one's lover in a little suspense—(*knocks again.*) Coming, coming! Bless me, he's very impatient. There, now I'm all right; and now for opening the door—(*knocks again*).

(*Enter* MR. BROWN *at door in flat, which he leaves open,*) Oh, it's you, Mr. Brown.

BROWN. At last, my cruel Caroline, I behold you. I almost feared you would refuse me admittance.

MRS. SOM. What! Do you think yourself so very dangerous then.

BROWN. Not that; but you can, I hope, make some allowance for the feelings of an anxious lover.

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MRS. SOM. You must not talk in that manner; for if any-one should over-hear you—(*sound of a flute is heard under the window*).

BROWN. Why that's a flute, and very like the tune that our neighbour Smith is so perpetually playing.

MRS. SOM. The very same. (*Aside*)—and the signal mentioned in his letter.

(*Mrs. Somerton opens the window, then says to Brown*) He's coming to spend the evening with us.

BROWN. With us? Oh, Caroline! Caroline, this is cruel of you.

MRS. SOM. Cruel, indeed: why, what do you take me for? In the absence of my husband to remain alone with a man; and (*sneeringly*) such a captivating young man as you, Mr. Brown? Oh, no, I could not think of such a thing.

BROWN. Then this is only to save appearances.

MRS. SOM. Oh, nothing more.

BROWN. (*Aside.*) Well then I must put up with it; but it is dev'lish unpleasant for all that.

(*Enter* SMITH, *on tiptoe, with a flute in one hand, and carrying in the other a basket with sundry provisions.*)

SMITH. (*Looking in.*) The door left open: it is evident then she expects me. Are you alone, my pretty Caroline? (*advances.*)

MRS. SOM. Oh, no; Mr. Brown is here, come on purpose to keep us company.

SMITH. Brown!

BROWN. At your service—if I can be of the slightest use to you.

SMITH. Certainly, I'm delighted. (*Aside*) The devil take him, say I. (*To Mrs. S.*) When is he going? I suppose he does not sup with us?

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MRS. SOM. To be sure he does. (*Alternately to one and the other*) My husband, you know, is gone to the city ball to-night; and I stay at home with two of his friends; if I was with one only, they might raise ill reports of me; but with two, even slander itself can say nothing.

SMITH. Oh, certainly; you are very right. (*Aside*) This fellow Brown is invited, I see, as a sort of go-between, and cloak to cover our proceedings; luckily, he is a great fool, and I can turn him about to my purposes as I please.

BROWN. This damn'd fellow, Smith, is always in the way—

SMITH. My dear friend—glad to see you *(to Brown)*.

BROWN. You are very kind.

SMITH. Come, make yourself useful, and help me to open my provision store.

MRS. SOM. Aye, so do, and here's a table nearly ready to receive all.

SMITH. (*To Brown*) Well, prepare the table for some of Birch's very best. (*Aside to Mrs. S.*) You beauty, I adore you more than ever.

MRS. SOM. Are you mad?

SMITH. Yes, I am, and you have made me so.

MRS. SOM. Be quiet—hold your tongue.

BROWN. (*Leaving the table, and coming down the other side of Mrs. S.*) What is that he's saying to you?—is he making love to you?

MRS. SOM. Quite the contrary; he is telling me I ought to listen to you.

BROWN. Oh, then it's all right!

MRS. SOM. (*going to the table*) The knives and forks are wanting—I'll go for them in the next room, and at the same time order coffee and liqueurs to be got ready.

BROWN. Pray do not trouble yourself.

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SMITH. She's right; its all the fashion now—(*Mrs. S. goes out at door O. P.—Smith is about to follow her.*)

BROWN. (*stopping him*) Isn't she a delightful creature?

SMITH. What are you talking about?

BROWN. (*As Smith is again about to follow Mrs. S., takes him by the arm and brings him forward.*) Now, my dear fellow, you can help me in a most essential manner with her.

SMITH. Help you!

BROWN. And if you will rely on my gratitude—

SMITH. Why, my friend, I think you are out of your mind.

BROWN. How!

SMITH. Why, I calculated on you to plead my cause with Mrs. Somerton—

BROWN. On me!

SMITH. That is, if you wish to preserve my good opinion.

BROWN. You love her, then!

SMITH. That I do.

BROWN. So do I, a hundred times more than you do.

SMITH. You, fellow! love her!—I'd have you to know—

BROWN. And I'd have you to know—if, sir, you have the audacity only to think—

MRS. SOM. (*without*) Now then here they are—

SMITH. She's coming; so pray be silent before her.

MRS. SOM. (*entering*) Now, gentlemen, to supper.

BOTH. Aye, to supper!

BROWN. I shall have an eye on that fellow—(*aside*)

SMITH. (*aside*) I shan't lose sight of you, Mr. Brown, I promise you.

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BROWN. Smith, my dear fellow, give me your hand—a thousand thanks—

SMITH. Why, what's the man thanking me for!

MRS. SOM. Why, for the handsome supper to which you have invited him.

SMITH. It is not to me, but yourself, my dear Mrs. S., to whom all thanks are due.

MRS. SOM. Oh, no! to you.

BROWN. To you both—you, my charming madam, (*to Mrs. S.*) and you, my good friend—to you both.

SMITH. The man's a fool! (*going to table*)

(*Mrs. Som. sits at table, with Brown at her right hand, and Smith on her left hand.*)

MRS. SOM. Well, really, this is delightful—by the side of those we love, and opposite to those we esteem—surely man can desire no more!

BROWN. After all, I flatter myself I am the man—(*aside*)

MRS. SOM. Now, gentlemen, pray help yourselves.

BROWN. I will first of all propose a toast—"Here's to the beautiful Caroline."

SMITH. "To the beautiful Caroline!"—the rascal there has got the start of me.

(*As they are about to fill their glasses, a knocking is heard at the door.*)

MRS. SOM. Bless me, who can be knocking at this hour?

BROWN. It's very odd—

SMITH. And very unpleasant.

SOM. (*without*) Caroline, my dear, open the door to me.

MRS. SOM. It's my husband! I'm lost!

BROWN. I wish I was.

SMITH. I'm a dead man!

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MRS. SOM. But what's to be done?—hide yourselves, in mercy's sake!

SMITH. It's very well to *say* hide, but where? (*rises*)

MRS. SOM. (*Pointing to the chamber on the P.S. side*) There, in that little closet—make haste—I'm half dead. (*In a loud voice*) Coming Charles, coming, my dear. (*To Brown and Smith*) Keep silent, or we're ruined—(*they enter the door of the closet, as she goes to the door in F, and lets in Somerton*).

SOM. (*Advancing*) This is not very kind treatment, my dear, to keep me waiting in this manner.

MRS. SOM. Don't be angry, Charles; the fact is, I did not expect you home so early.

BROWN. (*In chamber*) How her voice trembles.

SMITH. (*In chamber*) Enough to make it.

MRS. SOM. (*In a low voice, and pointing to the closet*) There they are.

SOM. Capital.—(*Aloud*) I don't intend, my dear, to go to this ball to-night.

BROWN & SMITH. } Oh!—(*a sort of mutual groan.*)

SOM. What noise is that, love?

MRS. SOM. I heard nothing—(*both scarcely able to smother their laughter.*)

SMITH. (*To Brown*) Don't breathe, or we're dead men.

BROWN. I'm dumb.

SOM. (*Looking at the table*) You don't appear to have been very disconsolate at my absence, my dear, to judge by the display on your table—patties, lobsters, tarts, jellies, wine—

MRS. SOM. Why, yes, my dear—and no—why—that is—

SOM. That is what, my dear?

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MRS. SOM. Why, I had invited two ladies, our next-door neighbours.

SOM. What! Mrs. Smith?

SMITH. My wife!

MRS. SOM. And Mrs. Brown.

BROWN. My wife!

SMITH. Leave these women alone for getting out of a scrape. } (*Inside chamber.*)

BROWN. And perhaps for getting us into one. }

SOM. So, my dear, you have invited our two neighbours. I'm very glad of it; run in, love, and fetch them, and say that supper is ready, and we are waiting for them.

MRS. SOM. I'll step in at once—

SOM. Aye, do.

MRS. SOM. And bring them in instantly—(*as she goes out at door in Flat, Somerton lays another knife and fork, and puts the table in order.*)

SMITH. My wife will not come, I'm sure.

BROWN. Nor mine either, for she expects me home.

SOM. There, that will do; I shall sit here, between Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown, and my wife opposite to me—(*goes up stage, brings down his pistols and loads them.*)

SMITH. Well, he's taking it very coolly.

SOM. I'm not altogether comfortable in my mind, for when I came in, it struck me that my wife looked extremely embarrassed—

BROWN. But what is he doing there?

SMITH. I don't know; I'll peep through the key-hole:—Why, as I'm alive, he's loading his pistols.

BROWN. Then he has certainly seen us.

SMITH. Hold your tongue, Brown, or he'll stop it for you.

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SOM. (*Talking to himself, but loud enough to be heard by Smith and Brown*)—And a thought came into my head, that if she could—but that is impossible, for I am sure she loves me; besides, she well knows that if I were to surprise any man here at this hour, if he were the dearest friend I have on earth, I'd blow his brains out on the spot. (*He is pacing the stage, and stops by the little closet where Smith and Brown are concealed, as he says the latter part of the sentence: they bob down their heads at his approach; he then seats himself by the table.*)

SMITH. (*Lifting up his head*) Did you hear what he said?

BROWN. Yes; but it won't bear repeating.

SOM. I'll load them both with a couple of bullets. Thank Fortune, that touch of jealousy was but momentary; I have no right to suspect my Caroline,—and at this moment I ought to be especially grateful to her for inviting our two neighbours, particularly one of them, who is the most amiable and delightful woman on earth.

SMITH. That's my wife!

BROWN. No; mine.

SOM. And I have been in love with her for a long time without daring to tell her so—

SMITH. If he's in love with her, it *is* yours—

BROWN. No; yours.

SOM. However, to-day I feel a little more nerve and impudence in my composition, and I'll contrive some opportunity of declaring myself; so, my next door neighbour, I'd advise you to be on the look out. Now let us put these out of harm's way in the closet—(*he goes towards closet P. S., and is about to open it.*)

SMITH. He is coming here!

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BROWN. Then we are a brace of dead men!

MRS. SOM. (*outside*) Come, my dear friends, this way—this way—

SOM. Oh the charmers! Here they come!—(*puts his pistols in a chair, and goes to door in flat.*)

(*Brown and Smith cautiously open closet door, and peep out.*)

BROWN. At present we are well out of that!

SMITH. Yes; if he don't come back. Every bit of my skin is like goose's flesh!

(*Enter* MRS. SOMERTON, *with* MRS. BROWN *in one hand, and* MRS. SMITH *in the other.*)

SOM. Ladies, most welcome!

MRS. B. Good evening, Mr. Somerton.

BROWN. That's my wife, the coquette!

MRS. SM. Mr. Somerton, your most obedient.

SMITH. And that's mine—the monster!

MRS. SOM. My dear Charles, our friends hesitated coming, for a moment, for fear of displeasing their husbands, but I assured them you would plead their cause before them.

MRS. B. and MRS. SM. And we have only come on that condition.

SOM. Willingly, most willingly—I was going to the City-ball to-night, but I feel no regret at having abandoned its attractions, since it has procured me the pleasure of passing the evening with you. Will you allow me to offer you a hand?

(*takes Mrs. Brown in one hand, and Mrs. Smith in the other, and places them at the table on each side of himself,—Mrs. Somerton opposite.*)

SMITH. Why, they are going to eat up my supper!

BROWN. And I am dying with hunger.

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Som. (*Tasting the Pattie and recommending it,*) This Patè is excellent, I assure you.

Smith. It ought to be, for it cost me half a guinea.

Som. Will you allow me the pleasure, charming Mrs. Smith?

Brown. Did you hear that? (*Aside*) Poor Smith!

Mrs. S. My dear Charles, I am the only one you have forgotten.

Som. True, my love, but hospitality to our friends made me a moment forgetful, (*they drink, help each other, and seem to enjoy their supper:*)

Brown. I don't hear a word now.

Smith. How the devil can they speak, when all their mouths are chuck full?

Brown. I should like, at all events, to see what they're about.

Smith. There's a window, let us get up on the table.

(*They shut the windows facing the audience, then put a table against the door, and two chairs on the table; they occasionally appear and disappear, the audience seeing what they are doing at the door.*)

Som. Well, really, this is one of the most delightful evenings I ever enjoyed.

Mrs. Smith. And, to tell you the truth, its very pleasant now and then to be away from the restraint of one's husband.

Smith. (*at the window*) Very, no doubt.

Mrs. B. And to enjoy a friend's society without any low and vulgar suspicions.

Brown. Very pleasant truly,—I say, the supper smells nice, don't it?

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SMITH. Your wife seems to think so, for she's making a tolerably good example of it.

SMITH. Brown, have an eye to your wife.

BROWN. Smith, have an eye to your forehead, (*holding up his two fingers.*)

SOM. My dear Caroline, we ought to be obliged by your kind attention and good supper, but it seems to me there is one thing still wanting.

MRS. S. What is that, Charles?

SOM. Why I dare say our friends would like one glass of Champaigne, just by way of a wind up.

MRS. S. Very true, Charles.

MRS. B. Champaigne! we have some capital Champaigne at home; but my husband, a niggardly fellow, always locks it up, and never offers any one a drop;—if you will wait a minute, I'll run in and fetch two or three bottles.

BROWN. Precious little devil!

SMITH. Hold your tongue, man.

SOM. You shall not go alone,—allow me to escort you.

BROWN. Why the fellow offers his arm to my wife.

MRS. S. By no means, I will go with you, my dear Mrs. Brown, and Charles shall stay and keep Mrs. Smith company.

SMITH. So much the better, then she'll be under my own eye.

MRS. B. Come along, my dear, we'll be back in a moment; but mind, my husband must know nothing about it, (*they go off at door in flats, followed to the door by Somerton and Mrs. Smith.*)

BROWN. The baggage.—I'll murder her. (*pokes his body half out of the window, and is pulled back by Smith, an*

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action they alternately repeat, until the door is shut and Somerton and Mrs. Smith have advanced.)

SMITH. Be quiet, Brown.

BROWN. I'll be the death of her.

SMITH. We shall be the death of one another, if you don't be silent.

SOM. At length, my dear Mrs. Smith, we are alone.

MRS. SM. And what then, my dear sir?

SOM. What, can you not guess?

MRS. SM. No.

SMITH. Why, what the devil is going to happen now?

BROWN. Hush! be quiet, Smith.

BROWN. Do you see Somerton whispering to your wife?

SMITH. Whispering proves nothing.

SOM. (*Going nearer to Mrs. Smith.*) I have sought this delightful tete-a-tete for many a long day past.

MRS. SMITH (*Drawing herself up.*) Sir, do you know to whom you address yourself?

SMITH. That's a settler for him. (*Aside at window.*)

SOM. To the most beautiful, most adored, yet most cruel of her sex.

MRS. SM. You greatly astonish me,—this is the first time you ever—

SOM. If my lips have been silent, surely my looks must have made you acquainted with this passion, that will only end with life.

MRS. SM. Pray think no more of me,—remember—I'm married.

SMITH. Charming creature, Isn't she, Brown?

SOM. Oh, I know that; but to whom?—a fellow not capable of appreciating your numerous attractions,—a low person

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altogether unworthy of your matchless beauty and innumerable charms.

SMITH. What's that he says, Brown?

BROWN. Be silent, I tell you.

MRS. SM. My husband is certainly very inattentive sometimes.

SOM. To be sure he is—a scoundrel!

MRS. BR. Often absent from home.

SOM. Abominable!

MRS. SM. And I must admit, his manners are not particularly polished.

BROWN. I say, Smith,—she seems to have studied you pretty well.

SMITH. I'll poison her—my manners indeed!

MRS. SM. And he has not much of the man of fashion about him.

SOM. He's a positive lout.

SMITH. I'll poison her.

MRS. SM. But still he is my husband, and I ought—

SOM. You ought only to think of a love the most tender, and the most impassioned. Behold me, dearest, at your feet.

MRS. SMITH. Rise, pray.

SMITH & BROWN. } On his knees!

MRS. SM. *(Aside)* Poor Mrs. Somerton, who was so sure of her dear Charles's heart, and defied us to make him inconstant.

SOM. What says my love—my darling?

MRS. SM. Oh nothing, nothing: rise, pray, pray—leave me.

SMITH. The abominable creature! she's giving way.

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BROWN. It's like 'em all—except Mrs. Brown.

SOM. (*Kissing her hand.*) You divine creature, grant me one favour—my demand is not a very exorbitant one,—give me this bouquet, here in your bosom, as a pledge of your affection. (*He takes a bouquet out of her bosom.*)

MRS. SM. Pray—pray leave me.

SMITH. There, he has taken her bouquet.

MRS. SOM. (*Outside*) Come along, give me one of the bottles.

SOM. They are coming back.

BROWN. High time, eh, Smith?

SMITH. I'm suffocated; I shall choke with rage.

(*During the whole of this scene,* BROWN *had been pulling back* SMITH *by the coat, who was putting his head out too forward.*)

(MRS. BROWN *entering with* MRS. SOMERTON.)

MRS. B. Here they are, and we have picked out a couple of the very best in the cellar. (*They all sit again at table.*)

MRS. SM. That's right, my dear; that's just how I always serve Mr. Smith.

SMITH. (*At window.*) Oh dear, oh lord.

SOM. Well, now we've got his wine we had better make use of it; and the least we can do is to drink Brown's good health.

ALL. With all my heart.—Here's Brown's health.

MRS. BR. Timothy Brown, your very good health.

BROWN. (*At window.*) Thank ye, and be d——d to you. Oh my very best champaigne!

SOM. It's really excellent; and as long as we havn't Brown's company, the more of this sparkling champaigne we have, the more agreeable.

BROWN. You're very good.

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SOM. And now allow me to propose Mr. Smith's health. (*they drink*).

MRS. SOM. Now suppose we go in the next room, and take a cup of coffee. (*They rise.*)

SOM. A very good idea.—Ladies, allow me to offer you each a hand.

MRS. S. Aye do, and follow me. (MRS. SOMERTON *goes out at door O. P., followed by* SOMERTON, *between* MRS. SMITH *and* MRS. BROWN. *As soon as they are gone,* BROWN *and* SMITH *get down and replace the chairs and table, which they had placed against the doors, they then come out and pace the stage in a furious manner.*

SMITH. Perfidious woman! who would ever have thought it?

BROWN. My dear fellow, don't run about in this manner; be calm, and let us talk it over. *(pacing the stage furiously.)*

SMITH. I'm half mad, Brown.

BROWN. No wonder—so would I be, if I were you.

SMITH. It's monstrous.

BROWN. Infamous—shocking—ha, ha, ha!

SMITH. What the devil are you laughing at?

BROWN. My dear fellow, I'm not laughing; its an hysterical sympathy with your situation. (*Aside.*) Poor Smith! who was so sure of the virtue of his wife. Upon my soul, I can't help laughing if I were to die for it. (*To Smith.*) Pray pardon me: but I really cannot help it. (*Stamping of feet without*).

SMITH. Hush—somebody's coming! Help to replace the chairs, and—(*they replace them*).

BROWN. Psha! 'Tis all fancy. So suppose now, while they are at their coffee in the next room, we sit down here

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and pick a bit, and take the liberty of making free with some of my own dear wine.

SMITH. Thank you, I'm not hungry.

BROWN. But I am; for I've had nothing to take away my appetite; and really this paté of yours, Smith—(*He goes to the table, cuts a bit of the paté, and is just about to eat, when the door opens.*) By all the saints in the calendar, here's my wife coming—(*he hides under the table.*)

SMITH. His wife!—(*he hides himself behind the easel, on which a picture is. Enter* MRS. BROWN, *speaking as she enters door O. P.*)

MRS. B. Now do allow me. While you are finishing your coffee, I'll go and clear the supper table, and put all in order. (*Coming forward.*) Well, I must confess that Mrs. Smith is a terrible flirt.

SMITH. (*Behind easel.*) There's no doubt whatever of that.

MRS. B. What looks she has been glancing towards Somerton; I really blush'd for her.

BROWN. (*Putting out his head from under the table.*) My dear little wife, I'd give you a kiss if I dared.

MRS. B. At the same time, I must confess that Somerton is very agreeable, and also that he has—

BROWN. Not so fast, Ma'am, if you please.

SMITH. They are birds of a feather, that's evident.

MRS. B. He has also a fine figure and a good expression of countenance.

BROWN. (*Putting his head out.*) It's a damn'd lie. (*Here* SOMERTON *steals softly in at O. P. door.*)

MRS. B. But I cannot understand how he could have such bad taste as to make love to Mrs. Smith, a woman altogether so unworthy of him; that is a thing I really never can forgive him for.

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SMITH. Nor I either.

SOM. (*Touching Mrs. Brown's shoulder*) What, still inflexible!

MRS. B. (*starting*) Oh, Mr. Somerton! you quite frightened me!

SOM. Fear! Oh fear is not the sentiment with which I would inspire you!

SMITH. (*Popping his head from behind the easel, at the same time that Brown puts his head from under the table, and seems in a violent rage*) It's your turn now, Brown.

MRS. B. (*To Somerton*) I suppose you think you are addressing Mrs. Smith.

SOM. Mrs. Smith! I detest her very name—I cannot endure the sight of her; and if I seem'd to pay her any particular attention, it was only to divert the thoughts of one who knows too well who is the object of my affections.

MRS. B. I really do not understand you, sir!

SOM. The moments are precious—only say that some day you will bless my vows—name some time when I may hope, and till then give me some slight token of one I can never cease to love—promise me this, adorable woman!

BROWN. Familiar rascal!

SMITH. This is worse than what he said to Mrs. Smith!

SOM. What, silent! dearest one! then give me this bracelet, twined around your arm—(*takes bracelet from her arm.*)

MRS. B. Oh! pray give it me back—(*here Brown shakes his fist at her*) if my husband were but to see it!

BROWN. He must be damn'd blind if he did'nt!

SOM. Oh! don't think of him—dear, kind creature! give me but one kiss.

MRS. B. Sir! really sir—this audacity—

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SOM. There's no harm, dear, in a kiss—(*gives her several kisses, against which she slightly struggles.*)

SMITH. (*Chuckling*) How they sound!

BROWN. The trait'ress!

MRS. B. (*Struggling with Somerton*) Oh! if my husband were to hear him!

SMITH. He must be damn'd deaf if he don't—(*Mrs. Brown gets away from him with some difficulty, and runs into the chamber O. P.*)

SOM. She's a charming creature! and I decidedly give her the preference.

SMITH. I'm glad of it—the scoundrel!

BROWN. Oh! the blackguard!

SOM. However, they are both dev'lish nice girls, and will answer one's purpose very well to pass an hour or two with now and then—altogether, we've had a delightful evening, and I must now go and put by my pistols, which I had quite forgotten—(*goes and takes pistols off the chair*). Oh, Mr. Smith, Mr. Brown!—Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith, I strongly suspect I shall give you both a violent headache!—(*Exit into closet P. S.*)

BROWN. (*Looking out.*) Pheugh, where is he gone?

SMITH. (*Peeping on one side of the glass.*) Hold your tongue; there he is, with those damned pistols again. (*Here* SOMERTON *closes up the window, goes towards the door O. P. pointing laughingly at the table, and exit.*)

SMITH. (*Peeping out.*) Brown!

BROWN. (*Looking up.*) Smith!

SMITH. We are a pretty couple.

BROWN. Very. Give me your hand. (*they come out and embrace each other*).

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SMITH. Oh Mrs. Brown!

BROWN. Oh Mrs. Smith!

SMITH. Oh that bracelet!

BROWN. Oh that bouquet!

SMITH & BROWN. (*Forcing a laugh.*) Ha! ha! ha!

SMITH. It's exceedingly droll.

BROWN. And extremely pleasant.

SMITH. But I'll be revenged, Brown.

BROWN. And so will I. Give me your hand; we'll have a mutual alliance, and come to a determination to take ample revenge.

SMITH. Let us embrace again. (*They embrace.*) Now my mind's made up.

BROWN. I was beginning to despair, but I'm nerved again—we'll treat them exactly as they deserve—

SMITH. The idea of making such a fuss, and talking of cutting our throats, about one's wife's virtue.

BROWN. Particularly when she hasn't got any.

SMITH. Let us turn Philosophers, Brown, and satisfy ourselves with knowing that half the world are like ourselves.

BROWN. To be sure. Besides, after all, it's a thing, that if you don't know, it's of no consequence; and if you do, you can't help yourself.

SMITH. Hush! they are coming back.

BROWN. And our hiding places are cut off.

SMITH. Very true; what is to be done?

BROWN. They are coming this way to a certainty. (*He runs under the dressing gown on the arm chair.*)

SMITH. Here they are sure enough. (*He runs under the uniform hanging in the portmanteau in the chair.*)

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Enter SOMERTON, MRS. SOMERTON, MRS. SMITH, *and* MRS. BROWN, *at door O. P.*

SOM. And you really will go then?

MRS. SOM. Oh, pray don't think of going yet.

MRS. B. We really must;—it's ten o'clock and past.

MRS. SM. And I really tremble for fear my husband should have reach'd home.

MRS. SOM. I rather think not.

MRS. SM. However, they both may be, and although they should happen to be a little sulky, it is as well not to displease them too much.

SOM. Now listen to me. If on your return your husbands should pick a quarrel with you, I'll tell you both a way to make them silent.

MRS B. and MRS. SM. What is it?

SOM. To tell them—

MRS. B. and MRS. SM. (*Eagerly.*) Well, what?

SOM. A circumstance that happened the other day, to one of my most intimate friends.

MRS. SM. And to his wife?

SOM. Yes. Well, this friend had two neighbours—

SMITH. Brown!

BROWN. Smith!

MRS. SOM. Which neighbours had two wives.

MRS. B. and MRS. S. Oh! wives,—well.

SOM. These two neighbours had a great desire to seduce the affection of my friend's wife.

(*All here are silent, and paying deep attention.*)

MRS. SOM. Which she immediately mentioned to her husband.

SOM. And he, bent on having his revenge on them, deter-

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mined to seduce the affection of both their wives in return.

SMITH and BROWN. Oh!

(*Mrs. Sm. and Mrs. Brown look confusedly at one another.*)

SOM. Yes, and, in concert with his wife, got up a capital farce, with the two ladies. He alternately made the most desperate love to them, vowing eternal fondness to one, and perpetual constancy to the other; and in return for all his apparent devotion, he received from one, in token of her regard, a beautiful bouquet.

MRS. SMITH. (*Aside.*) A bouquet!

MRS. SOM. And from the other a—what was it?—Oh, I remember, a bracelet.

MRS. B. (*Aside.*) A bracelet!

SOM. But the most extraordinary part of the whole business was—that all this took place in the very presence of their husbands!

(*Here Smith and Brown, who during the dialogue have been dressing themselves as well as they could in the uniform and hat, and the other in the dressing-gown and morning-cap, look in consternation at each other and change places.*)

MRS. SOM. What,—

MRS. B. In their presence? (*looking anxiously round.*)

SOM. Yes, in the presence of the husbands, who dared not say a word, because they were, in the first instance, the guilty party.

SMITH. I'm all amazement!

BROWN. I'm worse than that; I don't know what I am.

MRS. B. Perhaps these two ladies were not quite as culpable as you represent them, Mr. Somerton?

SOM. Undoubtedly not; for I ought to add, to their honor

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and credit, that they were in the secret, and only assisted the scheme to teaze their husbands. (*To Mrs. Somerton*)—We may as well give them the benefit of this lie, my dear, to prevent any further mischief between them and their husbands.

MRS. SOM. Oh, to be sure, to be sure—(*To Mrs. Smith and to Mrs. Brown.*) Oh yes, it was only a neighbour's frolic—a game of tit-for-tat, very cleverly played.

(*Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown appear to recover a little.*)

SMITH. Is it possible?

BROWN. I breathe again.

MRS. SOM. And the matter ended in the two husbands coming from their hiding places, falling on their knees, and asking pardon of their wives for all their transgressions.

(*Smith and Brown have now partially quitted the arm-chair and portmanteau; and, dressed most grotesquely—the back part of the uniform before, arms in wrong sleeves, &c. —advance, and fall on their knees on each side.*)

MRS. B. What do I see? Mr. Brown!

MRS. SM. And Mr. Smith! I shall faint.

SMITH. Pardon, pardon, my love, for all my little offences.

BROWN. And pardon, Mrs. B., for all my peccadillos.

MRS. B. The forgiveness should be mutual—we have both been a little to blame; but as no harm has arisen out of it, why, come to my arms, my dear Timothy!

MRS. SM. Ditto, ditto, my dear Jonathan!

SOM. This is the exact termination of my friend's adventure; he gave back to each lady her respective property—to one the bouquet, and to the other the bracelet—(*Here Somerton presents the one to Mrs. Smith, the other to Mrs. Brown*)—and heartily forgave his two neighbours for the folly of attempting to make love to his wife.

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Mrs. Som. And all parties being reconciled, they finally agreed to confine their devotions to their own firesides, and never, for the future, to interfere with

THEIR NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.

THE END.

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12

A

SOLDIER'S COURTSHIP.

A COMEDY,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN POOLE, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

PAUL PRY; SIMPSON AND CO.; TURNING THE TABLES, &c. &c.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY LANE,

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3rd, 1833.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

(Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

1833.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lady Melford ..... MISS PHILLIPS.

Fanny ..... MISS TAYLOR.

Colonel Gayton ..... MR. COOPER.

The Scene lies at Lady Melford's Apartments in London.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

WHAT little of plot there is in A SOLDIER'S COURTSHIP, is taken, with scarcely any variation, from a piece which was unequivocally condemned on its first representation, at the *Théâtre Français*, although acted by the best performers that ever adorned its boards!! This circumstance, however, (though, perhaps, the declaration is needless,) was not its peculiar recommendation to my notice. The cause of its failure was obviously the defectiveness of its dialogue, which was feeble, pointless, and slovenly, in the extreme. The subject itself appeared to me a whimsical one, and to require nothing more than ordinary care in the treatment of it, to render it a vehicle for the display of some good acting. With this view I ventured to re-write it; and the attempt has succeeded far beyond what I expected from so slight a work.

J. P.

London, 31*st December*, 1833.

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A SOLDIER'S COURTSHIP.

SCENE—LADY MELFORD'S *Apartments.*

O. P. LADY MELFORD *discovered, in a thoughtful posture, seated at a table.* FANNY *at a short distance from her, at work,* P. S.

LADY M. Fanny! (*With a sigh.*)

FANNY. My lady?

LADY M. I wonder whether this arbitration will ever be determined?

FANNY. Every thing must have an end, my lady; even a lawsuit.

LADY M. In the mean time I am put to serious inconvenience. The large sum which I placed in my banker's hands is nearly exhausted; and one's expenses in London—!

FANNY. Ah, my lady! milliners' bills are bad enough; but lawyers—!

LADY M. However, I doubt not that, at last, the award will be in my favour. (*A pause.*) Fanny! (*In a melancholy tone.*)

FANNY. My lady? (*Imitating her lady's tone.*)

LADY M. I'm tired of my life!

FANNY. That's because your ladyship is a widow.

LADY M. I was tired of it before.

FANNY. That was because you were married.

LADY M. Is there nothing to enliven this stupid existence?

FANNY. I know of nothing but love, my lady.

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LADY M. But love leads to marriage: 'twould be again the same dull round.

FANNY. True; and with marriage there's an end of love. (*A pause.*)

LADY M. Fanny!

FANNY. My lady?

LADY M. Give me a book. (FANNY *goes to book-shelf, top* P. S.) Any one—(*impatiently*)—the first within reach.

FANNY. I'm afraid you'll find no amusement in reading.

LADY M. No matter; 'tis my destiny to die of ennui.

(FANNY *gives her a book.*)

FANNY. Certainly your ladyship has not been fortunate in this visit to London. You delight in all that is strange, and odd, and whimsical; yet in the two months we have been here not a circumstance has occurred to provoke even a smile.

LADY M. I have so completely forgotten all the signs of mirth, that I really believe I should faint at the sudden surprise of a titter.

FANNY. For the same reason, my lady, I'm certain that the sound of a good hearty laugh would be the death of *me.*

LADY M. Heaven send us some fool for our diversion!—(LADY M. *listlessly draws a chair towards the window,* 2 E.P.S.)

FANNY. Amen, my lady. (*Aside, and observing her.*) So—to the window. Then I know who is at the window over the way.—I have observed, of late, that your ladyship is very partial to that window.

LADY M. Pray don't trouble me with your impertinences, but attend to your work.

FANNY. (*Aside.*) A *leetle* out of humour: then he is not there. These eyes of mine were given me for a better purpose than to keep them shut; and, from what I have ob-

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served, I don't think my lady would run quite to the world's end to get out of the way of a husband. Though not in the least curious, I have made my own private inquiries, and am informed that Colonel Gayton is a gentleman of the most easy assurance, but polite withal, amiable, and witty. I wonder he has never sought for an introduction. A single interview would be better than all this peeping and peeping from morning till night; and I'm sure that company less agreeable than his would be acceptable to a couple of ladies in our forlorn condition.

LADY M. (*Starting up.*) Fanny!

FANNY. (*Doing the same.*) My lady?

LADY M. Quick! quick! I have let my book fall out at window.

FANNY. Let your book fall?

LADY M. There is a gentleman picking it up. Be quick and prevent him the trouble of bringing it.

FANNY. (*Going off slowly.*) And prevent him — the trouble—of bringing it! (*Exit* P. S. D.)

LADY M. How the perverse thing moves! The gentleman —any one might be here and away again twenty times whilst she—

Re-enter FANNY, P. S. D.

FANNY. I was too late, my lady; the gentleman was already on the stairs.

LADY M. Where's my book?

FANNY. I think it's the gentleman who—

LADY M. Where's my book?

FANNY. That it's the gentleman who belongs to the window over the way.

LADY M. Once more, where's my book?

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FANNY. The gentleman is there—(*in an under-tone, and pointing to the door*)—and he most respectfully—insists—he will deliver into no other hands than your ladyship's.

LADY M. Why weren't you quicker? You are to blame for this foolery.

FANNY. Shall I admit him, my lady?

LADY M. No—certainly not—a stranger!

FANNY. Then he'll take the book with him.

LADY M. I—I don't care; but—I insist upon having the book.

FANNY. (*Archly and aside.*) Oh! Then since there is but one way of getting the book—(*goes to the door*)—Please to walk in, sir.

Enter GAYTON, P. S. D.

GAY. I cannot but be grateful for an accident which has procured me the honour—the happiness of an interview with Lady Melford. (*Gives* LADY M. *the book, which she passes to* FANNY, *who is on* R. H.; *she puts it on* O. P. *table, and goes towards* P. S.)

LADY M. I thank you for the trouble you have taken, sir; at the same time I should be warranted in expressing something more than astonishment at your forcing this visit upon me.

GAY. I have but one excuse to offer for my presumption, Lady Melford—I beheld you.

LADY M. (*Curtsies formally*)—Sir—(*points to the door*)—Fanny! (GAYTON *perceives the intention, yet hesitates to withdraw.*) Must I remind you, sir, that this is our first interview?

GAY. 'Tis in the nature of events that there must be a first.

LADY M. But since this will also be the last—

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GAY. You will the more readily pardon me if I desire to prolong it.

LADY M. (*Aside.*) This is the most modest assurance!—You are then resolved to remain, sir?

FANNY. (*Aside.*) I'll warrant it.

GAY. If your ladyship were seated, I might with less hesitation presume so far. (*He brings down a chair for her, and then one for himself, during which time* LADY M. *speaks.*)

LADY M. I prayed for a fool to divert me, and the gods are propitious to my wish. I'll humour this. (*They are seated.*) A plain question will disconcert him.

FANNY. Disconcert a colonel of dragoons!

LADY M. Now, sir, what have you to say?

GAY. Three words:—I love you.

LADY M. How! a declaration?

GAY. In the most undeniable form.

LADY M. It seems, then, that candour is to be the order of the day.

GAY. If your ladyship pleases.

LADY M. Then, sir, I don't believe you.

GAY. (*Archly, yet firmly.*) You do.

LADY M. How, sir!

GAY. To doubt me would be to asperse my taste, my sense, my judgment; 'twould argue me unworthy of the common blessing of sight, and deny in me the possession of a heart. To do *that* would be offensive; and Lady Melford would not willingly offend. You *do* believe me.

LADY M. Really, sir, this is so extraordinary that—(FANNY *is going* O. P.) Where are you going?

FANNY. Into the next room for more work, my lady.

LADY. Remain where you are.

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GAY. I have nothing to say to your lady which you may not hear; yet, if you have occupation elsewhere, pray don't let my presence detain you here. (*They rise.*)

LADY M. (*to* FANNY.) Go: this gentleman must perceive how much my embarrassment will be increased by being left alone with him; and good manners will then oblige him to take his leave.

FANNY. (*Whispering* LADY M.) I understand,—I'll not leave the next room. (*Exit* FANNY O. P. D.)

LADY M. You are not gone, sir!

GAY. You now compel me to remain: you are angry; and to leave you in anger would render me miserable.

LADY M. If instead of your own pleasure, sir, you would consult mine——

GAY. Why, faith, madam, I think I do, for I have the vanity to believe you consider me a very entertaining person.

LADY M. And agreeable, perhaps?

GAY. Why, even that is not altogether impossible.

LADY M. (*Laughing.*) I perceive you are resolved to make me laugh; so, pray go on, sir.

GAY. Lady Melford—since you are pleased to be so condescending, it is proper, first of all, you should know who it is that has the honour of addressing you. I am a gentleman—Colonel Frank Gayton, the only son of Sir Hildebrand Gayton, and sole heir to his large estates.

LADY M. Were I one of Colonel Gayton's creditors I might, perhaps, be delighted at the information.

GAY. Lady Melford—I have long since resolved that when I should meet with a woman who, with youth and beauty, should combine good sense and good nature, I would marry her.

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LADY M. Bless me! whether she would or no?

GAY. She would—for such a one should I be anxious to please; and seldom is it that a sincere desire to be agreeable fails of success.

LADY M. It follows, then, you have never yet met with such a one, or you would already be married.

GAY. Never—till now.

LADY M. The gallant and gal*lant* Colonel! (*A short pause.*)

GAY. Pray allow me to ask—what is your opinion of love at first sight?

LADY M. I cannot say, (*curtsies,*) for I have never yet experienced it. Now allow *me* to ask—does Colonel Gayton assume this tone towards every lady he meets?

GAY. (*Bows.*) Upon my honour this is for the first time in my life.

LADY M. So, then, for the first time in your life you please to be impertinent, and I am selected for the experiment.—(*Curtseys.*)—Upon *my* honour I feel greatly flattered by the preference.

GAY. 'Tis because this is the first time in my life I was ever seriously in love.—Now permit me just to explain myself, and you will perceive there is no offence in the least in it. Courtship, like all other human matters, must have a beginning and an end. Grant it shall endure a twelvemonth, it must infallibly terminate in "yes," or "no." Now, twelve whole months of doubt are much too long to suffer if they are to end in disappointment; whilst, if destined to lead to happiness, I cannot but think the delay a shamefully prodigal waste of time in these short lives of our's.

LADY M. (*Laughing.*) Well, Colonel, that I may not be blameable for the loss of so much of your valuable time, I

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am willing to fancy that you have already passed your twelvemonth's probation, and are now tremblingly awaiting my decree. Now, as you have only to choose between two little monosyllables, your modesty and penetration will protect you against any mistake in the selection. Colonel Gayton, good morning to you. (*Going*, R. H.)

GAY. Pardon me, Lady Melford — (*leading her back*) — but I am in a difficult position, for my modesty and my penetration are at variance. The first whispers me "no;" whilst penetration slily says, "Don't come to so hasty a decision, Colonel."

LADY M. You mean, then, that your marvellous penetration has discovered some foundation for hope?

GAY. Else wherefore am I here?

LADY M. And are sure, according to some extraordinary theory of your own, that, in the end, I shall fall desperately in love with you, and marry you?

GAY. I am not sure, but—faith! I would willingly wager half my fortune upon it.

LADY M. A wager! And how long time, pray, would you allow for so wonderful a revolution in one's sentiments?

GAY. Candour was to be the order of the day: you won't be offended if I tell you—how *little?*

LADY M. I am prepared for some whimsical reply, so speak freely.

GAY. Why, then—not more than twenty-four hours.

LADY M. (*Laughing.*) What! so long?

GAY. Probably less may suffice.

LADY M. But, admitting the wager, how will you be able to determine whether you have lost or won?

GAY. You, yourself, shall decide. Under ordinary cir-

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cumstances, decorum would forbid so explicit a declaration on the part of a lady; but as a lost wager is a debt of honour—

LADY M. The assurance—! You appear to be but little troubled by any doubts of success, Colonel.

GAY. So confident am I of winning, that, upon my honour and conscience, Lady Melford, I think the wager scarcely a fair one.

LADY M. I might say as much myself; so pray release your conscience from any qualms upon that point.—Now, Sir, at your peril—how much would you dare venture?

GAY. Any sum it may please your ladyship to name.

LADY M. (*Aside.*) I've a great mind to punish him for his impertinence—I will.—My coachmaker has just sent me his bill for nearly three hundred pounds—I'll bet you that sum.

GAY. Three hundred? Done.

LADY M. Then I may as well give you my coachmaker's address at once.

GAY. I'll pay him with my winnings, and we'll ride in the carriage together to church.

LADY M. But, good heavens! now I think of it—surely you don't intend to keep me talking here for the whole of those four-and-twenty hours?

GAY. There is no clause in our treaty against *that.* But I will avail myself of no ungenerous advantage: I shall ask but the permission to pay you three visits, at reasonable hours, and have no objection even that this should be considered for one.

LADY M. (*Aside.*) 'Tis the very excess of his assurance that renders it endurable; were it a jot less, it would be

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offensive in the extreme.—Be it so: but you will own that your first is a visit thrown away.

GAY. On the contrary: I have gained a point by it—I have *nettled* you a little; you might have been *indifferent.*

LADY M. Poor, infatuated gentleman! really I pity you!

GAY. Another point in my favour: "Pity is akin to Love." And, still farther to strengthen my position, Lady Melford, I will now leave you to your own reflections: solitude, also, is friendly to the absent lover.

LADY M. Your leaving me *is* in your favour, Colonel: it is certain I shall like you better—at a distance.

GAY. To be liked upon any conditions is one step in your ladyship's good graces. But this important point, at least, I have achieved: the fatal Spirit of Indifference is subdued; and, henceforth, your ardent love, or your unmitigable hate, must be the portion of him, who, for the present, Lady Melford, has the honour to take his leave.

(P. S. D. *Exit* COL. GAYTON.)

LADY M. The imperturbable coolness of the coxcomb! Yet he is not altogether a coxcomb, neither. There is a something in his very impertinences that prevents one's being seriously angry with him. But, should he return, what ought I to do? (*angrily.*) I'll—(*checking herself.*)—No; there is no need for harshness. But he'll not return—he can no more intend seriously to hold to this absurd wager than he can seriously hope to win it. Yet he is upon sufficiently good terms with himself; and imagines that because he is not ill-looking — nor unamiable—nor dull—nor stupid—Love him indeed!—I wish he may return: he requires a lesson of humility, which I will undertake to teach him. I'll win his money, and give it to Fanny for a marriage portion.

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(*Enter* FANNY, O. P. D.)

FANNY. I have overheard all that has passed, my lady.

LADY M. And were you not shocked at his presumption?

FANNY. Not absolutely shocked, my lady; to speak the truth, I thought it very amusing.

LADY M. Indeed!—and what think you of the wager?

FANNY. Why—I don't like the wager.

LADY M. And why not, pray?

FANNY. 'Tis too much money to risk.

LADY M. That's for his consideration.

FANNY. I mean for your ladyship.

LADY M. For me? for me! And would you insinuate that I am in the least likely to lose?

FANNY. A bet can't be decided till the race is run: besides, your ladyship is always unlucky at play.

LADY M. In short, you think it possible I could fall in love with, and marry a fool upon the strength of a quarter-of-an-hour's conversation with him?

FANNY. Every thing is possible: such fools are very dangerous fellows; and love does come by such unexpected ways! But, if this were my case, my lady, I wouldn't lose my money, at any rate: for the next four-and-twenty hours I'd say nothing in the world but "I hate you"—"I hate you"—"I hate you,"—whether I did or no.

LADY M. Whether you did or no! So then, for three hundred pounds you would tell a fib?

FANNY. Three hundred pounds? Lord, my lady, I've often told a fib for a great deal less than that. Now, let me manage this business for you, and you are safe.—As often as the Colonel comes, *I'll* tell him you hate him—and there's the wager won.

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LADY M. You will please not to interfere, Miss Fanny; I—I can tell him so myself. (*Go up a little.*)

FANNY. I beg pardon; but your ladyship seems to entertain such a horror of story-telling, that I thought you might not succeed in it yourself. (*Crosses to* P. S.)

LADY M. Does the silly girl really imagine—? (*Going,* O. P. D.)—Fanny, should Colonel Gayton call, I am not at home. Or—no—he would construe a denial into a confession of fear. Do you remain here and inform me of his arrival. (*She takes up the book, and is going.*)

FANNY. O, my lady! don't take that book—any but that.

LADY M. And why not?

FANNY. The deuce is in it, I'm certain; 'tis the very one you let fall out at window—'twill bring you ill luck, and you'll lose the wager.

LADY M. I have no faith in omens, Fanny. But, by the apprehensions you entertain for the safety of my heart, I can perceive of what materials yours is composed.

(O. P. D. *Exit* LADY MELFORD.)

FANNY. As to hearts, my lady, I believe a waiting-woman's to be made of exactly the same stuff as a duchess's. Gunpowder is gunpowder; and, whether in a golden casket, or a tin canister, 'twill as readily take fire at a spark.—(*Goes to door and peeps,* O.P.D.)—As I suspected: she's not reading, but at her looking glass, arranging her hair more becomingly. That's as good as six to four in favour of the Colonel. My mistress is wofully afraid of losing this wager—and yet, *I'd* bet a wager, she'd be very sorry to win it.

(*Enter* COLONEL GAYTON, P. S. D.)

GAY. I'm glad to find you alone.

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FANNY. I'll tell my lady you are here, Sir. (*Going.*)

GAY. No; I desire to speak with you.—(*Gives money.*) First of all accept this, Fanny.

FANNY. Five pounds! I can't tell you how much I admire this proceeding, Sir. There's no jesting where money is concerned—and this proves you love my lady in right earnest.

GAY. Most sincerely and devoutly. Now tell me, how long has she been a widow?

FANNY. An eternity, Sir;—no less than one whole year.

GAY. Did she love the late Sir Walter Melford?

FANNY. She married him to please her parents, and loved him—most respectfully.

GAY. Good. What sort of person was he?

FANNY. O, a charming person—every where but at home; and the most attentive creature—to every woman but his wife.

GAY. Was your lady much afflicted at her husband's death?

FANNY. Dreadfully! For a time 'twas thought it would kill her. Till the day of the funeral she did nothing but rave and scream and tear her hair;—that over, she thought no more of the matter. She paid her debt of grief in full and on demand; not by paltry instalments of sighing and whimpering a little every day for a twelvemonth.

GAY. That's all as I could wish it. Doubtless you have been told of our wager. Do you think I shall win?

FANNY. Why—twenty-four hours is such a *very* short time;—if, indeed, you had required eight-and-forty—!

GAY. Is that your only fear? Well, then, with a little of your assistance—

FANNY. Hold there, Sir: before I promise you *that*, I must understand in what way you desire it.

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GAY. In no way that shall compromise either your mistress's honour or your fidelity. Simply, if you should speak to her of me, say as little good of me as possible.

FANNY. That's a very easy task indeed, Sir. Yet I somehow think my lady would be very angry with me if I say much harm.

GAY. That's exactly as I would have it. Now, one question more, and then acquaint Lady Melford I am here. She is detained in London by an unsettled arbitration?

FANNY. She is, Sir.

GAY. The greater part of her fortune depends upon it.

FANNY. Bless me, you know that too?

GAY. I do; and I also know—(*she listens eagerly*)—what I cannot at this precise moment acquaint you with, Mrs. Fanny. Now—my respects to your lady. (*Goes up.*)

FANNY. (*As she goes off.*) (*Aside.*) That's a man I should be sorry to lay such a wager with, unless I could afford to lose a great deal of money indeed. (*Exit* O. P. D.)

GAY. Visit the second: and this will decide, in my mind, whether the lovely Clara Melford is ever to become Mrs. Colonel Gayton. In affairs of the heart 'tis often the first interview that determines the point, though custom requires a formal courtship to succeed it:—a course of ogling and sighing and whispering—of hope and fear—and doubt and jealousy—to my thinking, altogether a very uncomfortable period of probation. Now I, in the plentitude of my modesty, instead of a first, make a second interview the test. In love, as in war, no tardy sieges, but a *coup-de-main* for me. —She comes. Now to change my mode of attack.

O. P. D. *Enter* LADY MELFORD, *followed by* FANNY, *who*

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crosses and exits, P. S. D. LADY M. *has made some alteration in her dress.*

LADY M. Again here, Sir! I scarcely expected the honour of a second visit.

GAY. (*Gravely.*) I trust your ladyship entertains a better opinion of me than to have doubted it.

LADY M. I have reflected on the occurrences of this morning, and wonder how I could for an instant have listened to your absurd proposal.

GAY. Alas! madam—!

LADY M. But, how is this? melancholy, Colonel!

GAY. Unhappily, Lady Melford, with but too deep a cause.

LADY M. I perceive: having failed to carry your point by the gay, the light, the frivolous, you change your plan of attack and affect the sentimental. But 'twill avail you nothing. I will deal honestly by you, and forewarn you that sentiment is my aversion, and (*ironically*) a tender melancholy gives me the vapours.

GAY. Howsoever you may be pleased to designate my altered manner, you will cease to consider it an artifice when you learn that on my return home I received intelligence which compels me, almost instantly, to quit London.

LADY M. So much in my favour. By quitting the field you forfeit the stakes.

GAY. Your ladyship comes too hastily to a conclusion. I shall delay my departure till our four-and-twenty hours' are expired; by which time, (*sighs*) I trust I shall have won it.

LADY M. How, Sir?

GAY. And 'tis that thought that adds bitterness to my sorrow. How poignant will be my grief when, at the very

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moment you acknowledge me the winner, I must tear myself from you for ever.

LADY M. To spare you so severe a trial, I renounce the wager, and thus enable you to depart in blissful ignorance of the state of my heart.

GAY. By quitting the field *you* forfeit the stakes. Either way you will furnish me with funds for my travelling expences.

LADY M. It is consoling, however, to find that sorrow is no obstacle to your readiness of reply.

GAY. Neither does it prevent me, Lady Melford, from venturing a reproach.

LADY M. A reproach! and to me?

GAY. Yes, madam; you concealed from me, what I have since discovered, that we were not upon equal terms; that you held me at an advantage, for that your affections were already bestowed upon another.

LADY M. And who has dared to deceive you by—? O, I understand: *now* 'tis a touch of jealousy; but that will serve you least of all. I hate a jealous man! My late husband was jealous.

GAY. Pardon me, madam; jealousy would ill become me. If I complain, 'tis from the bitterness of disappointed hope. I was happy in believing your heart at liberty, but I find—

LADY M. Hold, colonel! If this be stratagem, you have exercised your ingenuity to no purpose; if, merely, curiosity, it shall be gratified. Let me assure you, then, that I have contracted no new engagement whatever, nor disposed of the very smallest particle of my heart,—(*curtsies,*) even after the second visit of Colonel Gayton.

GAY. Enough. Further to persist might be to offend you. You charge me, perhaps, with impertinent frivolity,

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with vain presumption; if so, Lady Melford, spite of appearances, you wrong me. Long have I presumed to love you; long has it been my greatest happiness but to behold you. All that your looks bespoke, your conversation has confirmed; and to the trifling accident which served me as a pretext for my extravagant visit to you this morning, I fondly hoped that—But no more of that: in obedience to a father's commands, I must away to present my hand where I never can bestow my heart—*that* is entirely and irrevocably—another's. Pardon, Lady Melford—pardon and forget the apparent levity of my behaviour. Ere this day be ended, you will receive unquestionable proof that, although I fail to win your affection, you would be unjust in withholding from me the title of your friend. (*Exit* P.S.D.)

LADY M. My friend! What can he mean? I am all amazement! Is this the frivolous, the self-sufficient coxcomb that first addressed me? How subdued, yet how earnest his manner. Could it be artifice? No; the look, the tone!—If there be truth in nature, surely that was truth. I know not what to think. Either he is one to deserve a woman's heart, or an incarnation of perfidy and deceit. He was right. The fatal Spirit of Indifference *is* subdued; and if I hate him —yet hatred is such an unbecoming passion!

(*Enter* FANNY, P. S. D.)

FANNY. Poor gentleman! What a change! Why, my lady, he is gone away with a face as rueful as Don Quixote's.

LADY M. Fanny, I am sadly perplexed.

FANNY. Bless me! Your ladyship seems as dismal as the colonel. You can't both have lost the wager.

LADY M. Would you believe it? he says he has seen me often—very often.

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FANNY. I know it, my lady.

LADY M. Love me !—that's impossible ! As for that ridiculous wager, I dare say many a thoughtless woman would consider it a very pretty method of declaring his passion.

FANNY. Some might;—especially if they are inclined to take the favourable side of matters,—as I am. Whether or no, he's a charming gentleman.

LADY M. How! With that self-satisfied air, that tone of raillery ?

FANNY. I did not think of that. In fact, my lady, he is an impudent, impertinent fellow.

LADY M. Impudent and impertinent are very coarse terms. His levity, to use the harshest word, was, at least, tempered by good-breeding.

FANNY. I don't think I ever saw better breeding in my life, my lady. (*aside.*) Two to one on the colonel.

LADY M. Yet, would a well-bred man offer to wager that he would win a woman's heart within four-and-twenty hours after the first interview ? One might pardon the wager as a thoughtless jest, but the time—the time !

FANNY. True, my lady. If he allowed so little to your ladyship, I wonder how many hours he would have proposed to me ? The insolent creature !

LADY M. Insolent ! Upon my word, Fanny, you are not very select in your expressions this morning. Would I have permitted the most distant approach to insolence ?

FANNY. Not the slightest, my lady. Upon the whole, I never heard of any thing more respectful than his behaviour; and, taken altogether, he's a perfect gentleman. (*aside*) Five to one on the colonel.

LADY M. I believe him to be a man of honour.

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FANNY. Not a doubt of it, my Lady.

LADY M. Yet, which of the whole race of man is to be trusted?

FANNY. Certainly not Colonel Gayton, my Lady.

LADY M. Silence! You seem to have resolved upon contradicting every word I say. Hark! some one is coming; run and see who it is.

FANNY. *(Aside.)* Ten to one on the Colonel.

(*Exit* FANNY, P.S.D.)

LADY M. 'Tis he—no;—he'll not come again. Whether he do or not, why should it concern me? Yet, after two visits to me, to quit London without calling to take leave would be an act of rudeness which—I wish he were gone! At least I wish that I could find in my heart to wish it.

Enter FANNY, P. S. D.

FANNY. Here are two letters, my Lady.

LADY M. (*Looking at the superscription of one.*) I don't know this hand. (*Looks at the other.*) O, from Mr. Firmpace, my Solicitor. First to business—(*Opens the Letter, and reads*)—"I have never doubted the ultimate success of your Ladyship's cause, though the captious opposition of our adversaries might yet have delayed the proceedings for many months. Thanks to the active exertions, for some sime past, of Colonel Gayton," (*exclaims*) Colonel Gayton! (*reads*) "who is distantly related to one of the principals, they have consented to an immediate award. Hoping that, in the course of this very day, I may have favourable intelligence to communicate, I remain your Ladyship's obedient servant." I'm all astonishment! "Thanks to the active exertions of Colonel Gayton." How very kind! Isn't it, Fanny?

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FANNY. *Very* kind, my Lady. (*Aside.*) That explains his hint to me.

LADY M. Give me the other. (*Opens the other letter.*) How is this! Three hundred pounds? (*Reads.*) "To Lady Melford. Our second interview has sufficiently convinced me that I have lost the wager. The privilege of a third visit, which might therefore be irksome to you, I relinquish; and have the honour to enclose you the forfeit." (*Exclaims.*) Ridiculous! "Do not reject it; for be assured that had I been so happy as to have won, I should have expected the same punctuality on your part. Horses are ordered for my journey, and I shall merely ask permission to pay my respects to you at parting. Your Ladyship's faithful servant, Frank Gayton." Don't you think this a very offensive proceeding, Fanny?

FANNY. No, my Lady;—on the contrary, a monstrous delicate one. I take it that the Colonel, discovering that the law-suit had put you to some inconvenience, hit upon this scheme as a means of assisting you.

LADY M. It must be so—the pretext—the wager itself was of a character too wild—too extravagant to have been seriously intended. I'll return this instantly.—No—I'll—I'll give it to himself.

FANNY. But suppose it seriously intended, I don't think you could be so cruel as to win it.

LADY M. I own, I should have been sorry—very sorry—had his conduct throughout confirmed my first impression of his character. I thought him vain, volatile, insincere; but his steady exertions in my behalf prove him capable of a very ardent and sincere affec——sincere friendship, Fanny.

FANNY. Very ardent—friendship—my Lady.

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LADY M. He is about to quit London—to be married.

FANNY. That would be double trouble.

LADY M. How so?

FANNY. Because I think he may just as well stay where he is—and be married.

LADY M. Ridiculous!

FANNY. I only spoke, my Lady. But here comes the Colonel, and equipped for his journey.

Enter GAYTON, P. S. D.

GAY. I have presumed, Lady Melford, to wait upon you once more, and for the last time. The pleasure of being the first to acquaint you that the award is given entirely in your favour would be greater than I deserve, were it not tempered by the pain I suffer at bidding you adieu.

LADY M. I am already informed, Sir, of the trouble you —I mean your very kind exertions in my behalf;—and be assured that my gratification is in no wise diminished by receiving the news of my success from Colonel Gayton himself.

GAY. With that assurance to console me, Lady Melford, I bid you farewell.

LADY M. (*With hesitation.*) When do you go, Colonel?

GAY. My chaise is now at the door.

FANNY. (*Aside.*) If that question do not send the horses quickly back to their stable, the Colonel isn't the man I take him for.

LADY M. It seems, then, it is unavoidable?

GAY. Which? My marriage or the journey?

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LADY M. (*Affecting a laugh.*) 'Tis a question of mere curiosity,—I—I mean the marriage.

GAY. My father, as I told you, is resolved I should marry,—yet, I think, he would allow me the choice of a wife.

LADY M. No—I—'twas the journey I alluded to.

GAY. Had I won my wager, my journey had been needless; as it is, this place has no longer a charm to detain me.

LADY M. So, then, you—you quit London?—decidedly?

GAY. Most decidedly.

FANNY. (*Aside.*) Most decidedly that's a—ahem!

LADY M. (*Pointedly.*) I am sorry, Colonel Gayton, you should have compelled me to embitter your departure by a reproach.

GAY. How have I been so unfortunate as to deserve it?

LADY M. Your jest, albeit of the wildest, I might have pardoned; but you have presumed to o'erstep the limits of forbearance: the enclosure in this letter, if seriously intended, would be an offence too deep to be forgiven. Take it, sir.

GAY. Really, madam, I intended no offence. I have merely performed my part of a contract founded on mutual good faith: having lost the—

LADY M. Nay, sir, no more of this—I neither will nor—not can accept it.

GAY. But it was *possible* I might have been the winner, in which case—

LADY M. Sir!

GAY. Was it *not possible?*

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LADY M. (*Hesitating.*) Since all things are possible, strictly speaking, that was possible. But once for all—

(*Offering the check.*)

GAY. Remember, candour was to be the order of the day. Tell me, then, why you refuse to receive what is fairly your own?

LADY M. Because I may not—candidly, I—I ought not.

GAY. But why, Lady Melford? Why?

LADY M. You will drive me out of all patience with your eternal "why"!

GAY. I am as little blest with patience as your Ladyship; so once and for ever, Why? Why? Why?

LADY M. Plague on the man! Would he have a person of common honesty accept the stakes when one has lost the wager? (*Throws down the check.*)

GAY. (*Joyfully.*) Ha! Victoria! Victoria!

LADY M. Heavens! what have I said?

GAY. You have pronounced my happiness. But 'tis thus, beloved Clara, (*kneels*) thus, at your feet, subdued and humble, the victor proclaims his conquest, and solicits his reward—a guerdon, peerless, priceless. (*Takes her hand.*)

LADY M. Rise! Really I am so embarrassed, I know not what to say.

GAY. Your silence, then, is the more graceful:—let me speak for both.

FANNY. (*Aside.*) He has tongue enough for twenty.

LADY M. Say no more; but confess that to take a heart by sap and stratagem is less glorious to the victor than—

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GAY. Than by a protracted siege according to the established rules of courtship. Humanity forbid! Capitulate at once, and spare the effusion of—sighs:

LADY M. Allow me a little time for reflection; and, if marriage be my destiny, 'twould be presumptuous in me to wrestle with fate.

FANNY. I had a notion from the first, sir, you'd win that three hundred pounds.

GAY. It shall be yours for a marriage portion, Fanny, if you can get a good husband.

FANNY. That I'll warrant, sir: I'll subscribe to a circulating library, and let a book tumble out of window every day till I find one.

GAY. But, hold: yet for awhile let Love hold the stakes:—the wager is not yet decided. We may not be umpires of our own cause; it is for more competent judges to pronounce whether A SOLDIER'S COURTSHIP has succeeded.

THE END.

Harjette and Savill, Printers, 107, St. Martin's Lane.

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P. P.;

OR,

THE MAN AND THE TIGER.

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

TOM PARRY, COMEDIAN;

AUTHOR OF "DAMP BEDS."

FIRST PERFORMED AT

THE ADELPHI THEATRE,

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21*st*, 1833.

LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

(*Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.*)

1834.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Farce was invented, written, sent into the Theatre, and accepted by Mr. Yates, within ten days. The Author is inclined, therefore, to attribute its great success more to the indulgence of the public than to any intrinsic merit of the piece. He cannot, however, let the present opportunity pass, without complimenting Mr. Yates upon his prompt attention—a dispatch of business that some managers would do well more frequently to imitate—and, at the same time, to thank him for his courtesy and politeness to an entire stranger.

Jan. 8, 1834.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Splasher	MR. YATES.
Mr. Startle	MR. W. BENNETT.
Mr. Somerhill	MR. HEMMING.
Lieut. Fusile	MR. BRAYNE.
Bob Buckskin	MR. JOHN REEVE.
Susan Startle	MISS ALLEYNE.
Crape	MISS DALY.
Duster	MISS GRIFFITHS.

Mr., Mrs., and the two Misses Jenkins,
Mr., Master, and Miss Jones,
Mr. and Mrs. Tomkins,
} *Visitors.*

Servants, Keeper, &c., &c., &c.

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P. P.;

OR,

THE MAN AND THE TIGER.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the House of MR. STARTLE.

Enter CRAPE, R. H.

How am I to discover this mystery? A chambermaid's curiosity is on the full stretch—something extraordinary is certainly contemplated—an express sent off to Gunter's, the cook—a quadrille band engaged—and the whole house in an uproar. My young lady knows not the cause. "We shall learn soon," says she, with the most provoking calmness. Dear me! what little curiosity some people have: nothing interests them—nothing excites them. I hate such *wishy washy* beings. I've been in a twitter ever since seven o'clock this morning—there's not a particle of me that's not in suspense. My little toes have even got the fidgets! If I'm not relieved shortly, I shall be in a high fever.

Enter BOB BUCKSKIN L. H.

Fever! Who's got a fever? Have you sent for the 'pothecary?

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CRAPE. Where did you spring from? You ought to have tapped at the door before you entered a lady's apartment.

BOB. The door was open, Miss Crape, and there wasn't no 'casion for a *spring*, seeing as how it's no five-barred gate; so I trotted in as you see.

CRAPE. Your language always savours of the stable, Mr. Buckskin,—you don't polish much.

BOB. Don't I though?—look at master's boots.

CRAPE. And now, may I ask—what brought you here this morning, Buckskin? (*Aside.*) Perhaps he knows what's going on—I'll sift him.

BOB. The old story—"Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is." I have carried the same message so frequently, that it's always running in my head. Yesterday I went to our saddler's to order a new set of harness,—my brain was certainly wool gathering,—for, when asked by the man what I wanted, I began as usual—"Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is."

CRAPE. Well we are going to have a great to do here to-day.

BOB. On what account?

CRAPE. Well asked, Mr. Dissembler! You and your master are both in the secret.

BOB. Are we?

CRAPE. Now, my dear Buckskin, don't tantalize me. There is a secret—an immense secret—and you know it.

BOB. I'm whipped if I do.

CRAPE. Sir, will you look me in the face, and say you don't know what is to take place in this house to-day?

BOB. Do you take me for a conjurer or a fortune-teller? How should I know what's a going to happen?

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CRAPE. Come now, be a good fellow, and tell me the truth, and I give you——

BOB. What?

CRAPE. No!—I'll not give—but you may take——

BOB. A kiss?

CRAPE. Oh! fie! I didn't say so.

BOB. It was pretty near it. (*Aside.*) I don't know no secret. I must invent one. I never boggled long at a lie—here goes a plumper. The old gentleman, Mr. Startle, is going to be married to-day.

CRAPE. What?

BOB. What a long *what*. Ah! it makes you open your eyes a bit.

CRAPE. Oh! this is beautiful news!—I'm so delighted! But are you sure it's true?

BOB. I had it from the parson's own man. It's a real fact.

CRAPE. So, Mr. Startle intended to astonish us. He spends half his time in plotting how he shall surprise people—his greatest delight is to take one unawares; but I'll spoil his sport—every body shall know it! I'll go first to Mr. Somerhill—no, I'll tell the servants first—no, I'll run to my mistress—no!—

BOB. (*Wiping his mouth.*) Miss Sally Crape, before you run away, recollect——

CRAPE. Another time, Mr. Bob, I am in a hurry. (*Advancing towards him.*) I can't stop any longer now.

BOB. No—no more can I. (*Catches her in his arms, and kisses her.*) Oh! barley-sugar's nothing to it. Sally, excuse my familiarity; but after a kiss, one knows one another so much better. Sally, do you think my master, Mr. Splasher, will ever marry Miss Susan?

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CRAPE. It is impossible to say; Mr. Startle rules their destiny—it will be as he pleases—he is imperative, and Miss is obedient.

BOB. And do you think *we* ever shall——Oh! I've a very decent place—good pickings, and pretty prospects. Shall I ever reach the winning post of your affections?

CRAPE. Why, Mr. Bob, you never said so much to me before.

BOB. And I don't know how I came to bring it out now; but I'm rather up in the stirrups to-day. Talking of marriage, you see,—the complaint's infectious.

CRAPE. How long have you been with Mr. Splasher?

BOB. Rising eight year. I was quite a colt then—Mr. Splasher broke me in;—and a very experienced hand he is at the whip. I gave him plenty of practice.

CRAPE. Poor fellow! such harsh usage upon your first entrance into life——

BOB. No! that wasn't the first go off. I had a false start. Mother 'prenticed me to a tailor; but, when they told me I should never be no more than the ninth part of a man, I declared off—no go!

CRAPE. The ninth part of a man! That's a very small proportion!—Then you went to Mr. Splasher?

BOB. Yes; but I found there that I had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

CRAPE. How?

BOB. Why, I an't no man at all now.

CRAPE. What are you then?

BOB. I'm a *Tiger!* Mr. Splasher's tiger! Whenever I misbehave myself, he threatens to send me to the Zoological Society; and, when I says they won't admit me, I'm no tiger,—he gives me the whip that they may know, as he says, my *genus* by the stripes upon my back.

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CRAPE. I could not have supposed Mr. Splasher was such a dreadful man! The next time I see him, I shall be ready to scratch his eyes out.

BOB. How that would make him stare! I don't mind a cut or two—I'm game! I never calls out. Well, good bye!—Master's ordered the cab at one! Sally, you've forgot what you promised me!

CRAPE. You've had it.

BOB. Being the first time, I did it very badly—let me try again.

CRAPE. I won't hear of such a thing.

BOB. Then I'll say no more about it. (*Snatches her in his arms, and kisses her.*)

Enter STARTLE R. H.

I've caught you!—So! so! (*Crosses to* C.)

CRAPE. Undone! undone! I shall never again be able to lecture the servants for their flirtations!

BOB. Hang him!—how he crept upon us! He must go with muffled hoofs!

START. Ha! ha! ha! What! I've surprised you!—how I enjoy this! Ha! ha! This is a lucky omen of success for the intended manœuvres of the day.

BOB. Master's compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is?

START. Who the deuce are you, sir?

BOB. 'Squire Splasher's tiger.

START. 'Squire Splasher's puppy!—there's a crown for your tigership. Deliver my compliments to your master—inform him the lady is in excellent health, and request him not to leave home till I have seen him.

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BOB. (*Taking the money.*) You may consider the thing done and done on both sides.

START. Now, then, vanish. Stop—one word more. If your *tigership* thinks to make prey of all the petticoats in my family, I shall unleash the dogs, and give signal for a Royal Hunt.

BOB. I shall go with a double curb for the future. My bit of horseflesh is at the door, therefore my master will receive your message in about three minutes and thirteen seconds. As to the petticoats, sir, I acknowledge I loves the dear little fillies—bless them! I'm no hypocrite there;—and now I'm off with a *canter*. (*Exit* L. H.)

START. I'll give that jackanapes a surprise before many hours are over. Crape, I'm shocked at your conduct—I thought you a pattern for the whole house;—but I'll look over every thing to-day—this indeed shall be a day of joy!

CRAPE. I declare he is quite in raptures!—and the man's been married before! (*Aside.*) If you would be kind enough, sir, not to mention the little circumstance!——

START. Not a word. Upon consideration you will never do so again, I'll not breathe a syllable of the matter, (*getting close to her,*) and thus I seal my promise. (*Attempts to kiss her.*)

CRAPE. No, sir. Should such a thing become known, it might give offence to one who has an exclusive right to all your salutes.

START. Now, what the devil does she mean by that? If any thing should happen to baulk the surprises I mean to give, it will be the death of me. Run, girl, and tell my daughter Susan I must speak with her instantly.

CRAPE. Yes, sir, I'll go. (*Looks at him significantly.*)

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(*Aside.*) Silly old man! what does he want with a second wife? (*Exit* R. H.)

START. I don't half like the mysterious manner of that wench! Can she know any thing? Impossible! I have been so close in the arrangement of my plans—so sudden in their execution, that I might have defied an Argus. All's right, I am confident, and this day will witness my triumph! A special license is procured—the wedding dinner ordered—friends invited—and this night my daughter will be Mrs. Splasher, without a soul interested knowing one word of the matter. What a surprise for all parties—splendid effect of my unrivalled tactics!—Let me revel in the fond anticipation of my glory!—The delight of Splasher, when he finds that, in a few minutes, he will possess the object he has been sighing months for;—the surprise of my daughter, when she learns she is so soon to become a bride!—the astonishment of the servants;—the wonder—the admiration of all! I am the happiest fellow in the universe!

Enter SOMERHILL, SUSAN, *and* CRAPE, R. H.

SUS. I can scarcely credit what you have heard, Crape.

CRAPE. Depend upon it, it is true, Miss—you are to have a Mamma-in-law.

SOMER. This is most strange! Yet the extraordinary preparations you tell me of certainly give a face to it.

START. (*Down* L. H.) Susan, I wish'd to—Ha! Mr. Somerhill here! I am glad to see you; you could not have arrived at a more opportune moment. I expect a few friends to dinner; say, shall I have the additional pleasure of your company?

SOMER. (R.) Sir, you could not have proposed any thing

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more agreeable to me. I shall do myself the honour. Perhaps this little festival is in commemoration of some important event in your life?

START. Sly dog! A very important event is about to take place, sir. I see, by your anxious looks, that you are all dying to know what it is—I shall surprise you.

SOMER. Forgive a friend's inquisitiveness; I am certainly—

START. On tenter-hooks, I know. Now, then, prepare for wonder.

CRAPE. (L. H. *Aside to* SUSAN L. C.) It's coming, miss; mortify him by not seeming in the least surprised.

START. (C.) Crape, leave off playing with that locket, and pay more attention. Now for it! Susan, my dear, why the devil do you whisper when I'm talking? I thought that female curiosity—

CRAPE. Is oftener prated about than felt.

START. Don't interrupt me when I'm speaking; it would serve you right if I were to keep you longer in suspense; but I'll be merciful! What I have to tell you, is—

CRAPE. (*Carelessly.*) In confirmation, I suppose, of the rumour of an intended marriage?

START. Rumour of a marriage!

SUS. (L. C.) Yes, papa; we know all about it! And I think it very naughty of you to endeavour to keep it a secret so long.

START. Every thing known! (*Drops into a chair.*) Oh! I'm a wretched old man!

CRAPE. Did you, sir, for a moment imagine that you could deceive us women? Female curiosity, you know, is—

START. The devil! Oh, for a dose of prussic acid!

SUS. I hope my new mamma will be kind to me.

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CRAPE. And not snub the servants.

START. (*Aside.*) New mamma! What jest are they upon?

SOMER. I hope, sir, that every happiness will attend you in the married state.

START. A hope crosses my brain! (*Aside.*) Perhaps they're on a wrong tack. I will know the worst. You think, then, I am about to take a second wife?

SOMER. So report gives it out, sir.

START. Report's an unblushing liar then. Marriage, a second time! No! I've tried it once! Thirty years of it is quite enough in a man's life. It is not my marriage that will take place to-day—but Susan Startle's.

SUS. Mine! Oh dear!

SOMER. Miss Susan's! Good heavens!

CRAPE. Young Miss's! Oh, Gemini!

START. There's astonishment! beautiful! I'm a happy old dog again! Oh, delicious!

SUS. This is so unexpected, papa!

START. Unexpected happiness is always the most welcome. I've ordered a casket of splendid jewels as a wedding present, baggage! What a foolish, fond father I am! Somerhill, I shall expect to see you at dinner—(*Crosses to* R.) They are absolutely confounded with astonishment—this is delightful! I haven't been so happy since the death of poor dear Mrs. Startle. (*Exit* R.)

SOMER. (R.) This is surely some horrid dream!

SUS. (C.) Alas, Somerhill! there is too sufficient evidence of its reality. You know not my father's eccentricity of disposition. But who is he to whom I am so unceremoniously allotted?

CRAPE. (L. H.) Oh, Miss! It can be no other than Mr.

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Splasher! And that little rascal, Bob Buckskin, to misinform me!

SOMER. One short month has not yet expired, my dear Susan, since first I had the happiness of being introduced to you. In compliance with your wish, I delayed declaring myself to your father; but I think I should have dared to disobey you, had I known that Mr. Splasher was received in the character of a professed admirer.

SUS. Somerhill, he was not so received by me. He has occasionally visited us when he could tear himself from his more interesting companions—his dogs and horses—and that but seldom. My heart is your's, Charles.

SOMER. What, then, have I to fear? In the possession of your love, and backed by a handsome fortune—

CRAPE. My dear sir, you mustn't stop talking here all day. Something must be done.

SOMER. Right, my girl; deeds, and not words, must be our motto. Adieu, dear Susan! (*Crosses to* L.) I've no settled plan, but go forth resolutely bent on doing something. I'll call in at St. James's-street, for my friend, Fusile, of the Guards, in case I should be under the necessity of cutting Splasher's throat.

SUS. Pray be careful, Charles.

SOMER. Oh, doubt me not! Violence shall be my last resort. Adieu, dearest! Soon will I be with thee again.

(*Exit* L. H.)

CRAPE. Come, ma'am; we are all in a pretty predicament. (*Exeunt* R. H.)

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SCENE II.

SPLASHER'S *Lodgings.*

SPLASHER *discovered at table, in his dressing-gown and slippers. Breakfast, &c.*

More than half the beef-steak unfinished! the ale untasted; and but one roll consumed! I'm assuredly going into a decline! This infernal London takes away the appetite; and when a man can't make a breakfast, he must be bad indeed! Chained to town in October!—melancholy idea. And for what? To dangle at the elbow of a wench who can't make up her mind to accept the common title of wife, till she has been courted a certain number of weeks—so the old blinker, her father, says. She is certainly rich; and, therefore, carries great weight! But what sacrifices have I not made! Cut Doncaster! Given up three weeks' popping at partridges; and paid forfeit to Tom Bolter, because I couldn't ride my match! I must tell the old one it must be P.P.—play or pay; for next week I have to attend Lord Leatherleg's shooting-party, and I wouldn't miss it for a bevy of wives.

Enter BOB, L. H.

You rascal, where the devil have you been all the morning?

BOB. To old Startle's, sir.

SPLASH. For what, sirrah?

BOB. Your compliments, and to know how Miss Susan is.

SPLASH. And who sent you?

BOB. Oh, I went quite of my own accord! I carried that message from you about a month back, when Miss Susan hurt her little finger in playing the piano. They were so

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polite and respectful, that I thought it was but handsome to go as often as I could. It was as good as ten shillings a-week to me.

SPLASH. Now mind, scoundrel, if ever you dare go again, without my orders, it shall be as good as a broken neck to you.

BOB. Beg pardon, sir! Queer news from the country, sir: Johnson, the trainer, is just come up.

SPLASH. Well, how's the stable?

BOB. That's very well, sir; the horses are but middling. *(Pulls out a book.)* Here's the list. *(Reads.)* Republican—out of order; Young Master—dead amiss; the General—has been on his knees; and Sobriety—has got the staggers.

SPLASH. Awkward that—a prospect of loss. No matter—can't have it every way. My book for the next Newmarket looks well—must win. However, I must make short work with old Startle, for the sake of the three thousand a-year.

BOB. *(Still looking over the book.)* The filly's your only chance now, sir.

SPLASH. *(Not heeding him.)* She's certainly a fine creature.

BOB. Uncommon clean about the pastern.

SPLASH. There is but one fault—she has hardly spirit enough for me.

BOB. Lord, sir, now I think she's over vicious. Why, she kicked our Dick in the throat t'other morning.

SPLASH. The devil she did!

BOB. She's a good-looking animal, for certain; but she has got some tricks: a nasty way of throwing out her legs; but once fairly started, she's a prime 'un.

SPLASH. Of whom are you speaking, whelp?

BOB. Why, here she is, sir—*(Pointing to the book)*—Miss

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Kitty, your three-year-old filly, what's a going to run to-day at Newmarket. It's getting on for one, sir; shall I bring up the cab?

SPLASH. No; tell them to saddle Rattler. I didn't ride above thirty miles yesterday—I want a little exercise. When will Johnson call?

BOB. I told him you would be at Tattersall's, and he'll see you there, sir.

SPLASH. Discharge the tea equipage, and bring my boots. (*Taking off his dressing-gown.*)

BOB. Oats, the livery-stable keeper, has sent in his bill for the week.

SPLASH. How much?

BOB. Ten pound ten.

SPLASH. Pay him. Ten guineas! These horses draw the purse-strings, and run away with the shiners.

(*Exit into dressing-room* C.)

BOB. Any pickings left? (*Going to table.*) What a voracious appetite the governor has! the best part of two pounds of rump-steak, and a couple of Yarmouth bloaters gone! He beats me hollow—I didn't eat half so much at my breakfast. I'll take a feed while I can get it. (*Begins eating.*) The steak's tough—the tea's too sweet—and the ale is sour.

(*Continues eating and drinking, while* SPLASHER *comes from dressing-room, unperceived by him.*)

Master was determined not to waste much. What a twist he has got!

SPLASH. I'll try. (*Takes him by the ear.*)

BOB. Murder! mercy!

SPLASH. What's your opinion of my *twist* now?

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BOB. It an't altered a bit!—I never felt such a twist!—You are tidy strong in the wrist, or you couldn't pull up them four bays as you do.

SPLASH. Well, bear it in mind; and let it act as a caution for the future.

BOB. I'm not likely to forget it for some time to come.—My memory wont want the spur.

SPLASH. Once more, get this room cleared; and should any one call, I'm not at home.

BOB. Beg pardon, Sir!—I quite forgot,—Mr. Startle requests you'll not go out till he has seen you.

SPLASH. I'm to be seen by no one else then. Hang the old twaddler, what does he want? I must endure the infliction. But, if he comes with any more of his infernal surprises, I shall be tempted to tell him, in the bitterness of chagrin, that I won't marry his daughter,—and that would surprise *him.* (*Exit into dressing room.*)

BOB. I'll order the *slavey* to take these things away. *(pulls the bell.)* What a flighty chap my master is—he goes it above a bit—stretches out—he must clap on a martingale, or I'll be hanged if he wont be down some of these odd days—

(*Enter* DUSTER, L. H.)

Clear the course, Duster!—Bring up Mr. Splasher's boots;—and tell Joe, the knife boy, to run down to the stables, and order them to saddle Rattler for the Governor, and Virginia for me.

DUST. Virginia for you?

BOB. Yes; she's a quiet thing. I'm vexed to day; and must ride easy.

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DUST. You are very particular, Mr. Buckskin.

BOB. I always was—and that makes me admire you so.

DUST. Oh, Mr. Buckskin! (*As she is looking at him, and simpering, she lets one of the plates fall.*)

BOB. There!—I knew if you looked at me, you'd make a slip.—There's eighteen-pence out of your four pound a-year. (*Assists in picking up the pieces.*) Never mind! put it down to Mr. Splasher's account— (*Exit* DUSTER, *with tray, &c.*) (*calling after her.*)—If that Joe don't go directly, I'll wring his ears for him!—What a pain I've got in the side of my head!—Master's rather too free with his fingers.—If I were lost or stolen, he could recover me by describing my marks.

(*Re-enter* DUSTER, *with boots,* L. H.)

DUST. Joe's off; and here's the boots.

BOB. There's the real japan! When Joe looks at them boots, doesn't he envy me, and think of his own insignificance?

DUST. Joe has a great respect for you, Mr. Robert.

BOB. So has every body what knows me.

SPLASH. (*Calls from within,* C.) Where's that whelp?

BOB. He wants Joe!

SPLASH. (*Within.*) Buckskin! bring my boots, you lazy scoundrel!

DUST. It's you he wants.

BOB. I wish I was Rattler this morning—I'm bless'd if I wouldn't fling him! Duster, don't go; I'll be back in an instant! (*Exit into dressing room,* C.)

DUST. That fellow's a *genus*—he has such a way of doing things.

SPLASH. (*Within.*) Clumsy blockhead!—Get out of the room!

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(*Re-enter* BOB *precipitately from dressing room.*)

BOB. There!—I told you I should be back in an instant.—I trod upon his corn while I was reaching the boot hooks; and then—

DUST. (L. H.) And what then?

BOB. (R. H.) As quick as lightning I found myself outside the door.—Miss Kitty's a fool to him. *(rubbing his back.)*

DUST. *Missus* is in the kitchen.—If I stay any longer, she'll blow me up.

BOB. Then don't go down to be blown up. Duster, if its your turn out next Sunday, will you take a walk with me in the evening?—Somebody's coming up stairs!—It must be old Startle!—If he sees me with a petticoat again, he'll be giving the signal for a Royal Hunt! Duster, can't you bolt?

DUST. There an't a bolt in the room.

BOB. Here's a mess!—Get into that arm chair; and don't stir, for your life, till I tell you! (DUSTER *sits in the arm chair; while* BOB *covers her with his master's dressing gown.*)

(*Enter* SOMERHILL *and* FUSILE, L. H.)

SOMER. (C.) You belong to Mr. Splasher?

BOB. Yes, Sir, but he's out of town—gone down into Oxfordshire; and rides a steeple chase, at three o'clock this afternoon, with the Honourable Mr. Riskneck.

FUS. (L. H. *Aside to* SOMERHILL.) He can't be the intended bridegroom then.—You are on a wrong scent.

SOMER. It may be a throw off. When do you expect his return?

BOB. He has ordered his dinner to be ready on Thursday evening, precisely at seven.

FUS. (*To* SOMERHILL.) You are evidently wrong—leave your card, and—

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SPLASH. (*Within.*) Where's that scoundrel Buckskin?

SOMER. Who is that calling?

BOB. Some blackguard in the street, Sir.

SPLASH. (*Within.*) Brush my coat, Sirrah!

SOMER. Is that in the street, also?

BOB. No; that's in the next room. (*Aside.*) I shall nab it nicely for letting these chaps up.—Lie snug, Duster! (R.)

SPLASH. (*Within.*) Buckskin!—Buckskin!—I'll certainly break every bone in that rascal's body!—

(*Enter* SPLASHER, *from dressing room, in his shirt sleeves—one boot on.*)

You vagabond!—I'll— Ha!—Mr. Somerhill, where have you been this age?—Very happy to see you. (*Aside.*) What the deuce brings him here?

SOMER. I am much indebted to you!—Allow me the honour to introduce to you my friend Lieutenant Fusile, of the guards.

SPLASH. Glad to see him.—You must excuse this dishabille; but really that fellow of mine is so indolent that—Get me a coat, Sir. (*Exit* BOB, R. C. F.)

SOMER. Presuming on a very short acquaintance, I have called to ask the assistance of your opinion in the purchase of some horses. Your vast experience and excellent judgment are proverbial; you will therefore favour me with your company at dinner to-day, to talk over the matter, prior to—

SPLASH. Command me at any hour to-morrow, or the next day, or when you please; but to-day I am sorry I cannot accept your invitation.

SOMER. (*To* FUS.) By all my fears, he refuses me!—it's plain.

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FUS. (L. H. *Aside to* SOMERHILL.) You must endeavour to keep him at home.—He's a sporting man.—Think of something.

BOB. (*Coming forward.*) Here's a coat, sir!

SPLASH. Did not I tell you I would never wear that heavy, ill-built coat again?—Bring me another.—Never mind, my dressing gown will do for the present.

BOB. Your dressing gown!—Hadn't you better put on a coat?—You'll catch cold, sir.

SPLASH. Am I to be obeyed?—Fetch the dressing gown—it's close at your hand.

BOB. Your brown frock sits easy, sir.

SPLASH. The dressing gown!

BOB. Or your favourite pea green, sir.

SPLASH. Then I must wait upon myself.—You impertinent puppy—I discharge you!—(*Snatches at the dressing gown, and discovers* DUSTER.)

DUST. What will my *Missus* say! (*She runs off,* L. H.)

SOMER. Ha! ha! ha!—You must pardon my laughing, Mr. Splasher;—but your servant's denying you is now accounted for—this is far less dangerous amusement than riding a steeple chase with Mr. Riskneck in Oxfordshire.

SPLASH. Laugh away, Gentlemen!—But it is not my bird. Do you think I should let her fly?—No, no—I'd have brought her down.—This is some of your work, Mr. Buckskin!

BOB. (R. H. *Aside.*) I can guess the consequences.

FUS. You are certainly detected, Mr. Splasher, in a little bit of smuggling.

BOB. (*Sheepishly.*) Will you put on the dressing gown now, sir?

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SPLASH. No; rascal! As you took it to cover your *misdoings*, continue it for the same purpose;—the housemaid can make a counterpane of it.

SOMER. An excellent present! She'll need additional covering as the cold weather advances.

SPLASH. Cold! Quite a West Indian atmosphere! Cold! I never feel cold. Custom requires that I should wear a coat; but, for comfort and convenience, I'd much rather be without one.

SOMER. (*Aside to* FUS.) A scheme has just entered my head, by which I think I can confine him to the house.

SPLASH. (*Aside to* BOB.) Have the horses at the door in five minutes. I shall find a time to settle accounts with you for this morning's work.

BOB. I expect the balance will be against me.

(*Crosses behind and exit* L. H.)

SOMER. I can't help smiling at your pretended indifference to our easterly winds.

SPLASH. East or west, sunshine or snow, it's all the same to me. I'm out all hours and all seasons; tough and weather-beaten—(*stretching out his arm*)—As Shakspeare somewhere says, "Hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve."

FUS. I perceive you have a scratch at the back of your hand; was it done with the foils?

SPLASH. No; that's a bite. My terrier Scamp caught at Rattler's heels; he flung out and broke the dogs leg; and, while I was strapping on the splints, the poor fellow mistook my hand for a paunch, that's all.

SOMER. Well, Fusile, I must take a gallop to circulate my blood. I'm below freezing point.

SPLASH. Ha! ha! ha! Shall I lend you a blanket?

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SOMER. I should like to put your boasted hardihood to the test.

SPLASH. Make it worth my while.

FUS. I must confess I do not think that Mr. Splasher could go without coat, cloak, or jacket, for an entire day.

SPLASH. Will you back your opinion?

SOMER. I agree with you, Fusile; before nightfall he would be glad to cry, "enough."

SPLASH. What will you lay of that?

SOMER. Five hundred pounds.

SPLASH. Done!

SOMER. Done!

FUS. A fair wager; I'm witness.

SPLASH. When is it to take place?

SOMER. There's no time like the present. You are not to wear any more clothing than you have now on, and all the fires to be put out. I will not be too hard upon you. An hour or two will be sufficient—say till six o'clock. Fusile shall have the liberty of looking in when he thinks proper; and should you go out, you must leave word whither you have bent your steps.

SPLASH. Then I'm not compelled to leave the house?

SOMER. That's at your own discretion. I suppose you have no particular wish to lounge up Regent-street?

SPLASH. And the bet five hundred pounds?

SOMER. Exactly so.

SPLASH. (*Shaking hands with him.*) All right. (*Aside.*) What a flat!

SOMER. I have but one condition more—that you will pledge me your word of honour, not to mention this wager till it be decided.

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SPLASH. Oh, with all my heart. You had better give me the money at once, Somerhill.

SOMER. Depend upon it, you're done! I shall have a nurse and a doctor in readiness in case of any serious result.

SPLASH. Pooh! have a hogshead of punch ready. Make it a thousand, and I wont wear a coat for a week.

SOMER. Ha! ha! ha! Well, we'll leave you to your meditations. The wind is getting up, Splasher. We will look in again presently, though we are sure of a cold welcome. (*Aside to* FUS.) Bravo, Fusile; our lucky star prevails—he is too much of a sportsman to give in. We've put a stop to the wedding! Good morning, Splasher! Shall we send you a fan? Good bye. Ha! ha! ha!

(*Exeunt* SOMERHILL *and* FUSILE, L. H.)

SPLASH. I did not think Somerhill had been such a young one. That five hundred is *bagged.* To-day my match comes off with Leatherleg at Newmarket — Miss Kitty against Bandit—two miles—a thousand guineas;—and as old Startle wont let me leave town, I'll e'en make myself comfortable at home, and earn the five hundred.

Enter BOB, L. H.

BOB. The horses are ready, sir.

SPLASH. Send them back, and order dinner at five—I shall keep house to-day.

BOB. That's a queer start—Why, he's got the uneasiness.

SPLASH. Do this, and return in an instant.

BOB. What a precious hard place mine is. I wish he was my tiger just for one day—how I would work him.

(*Exit* BOB, L. H.)

SPLASH. No more clothing than I've on now;—I'm not to wear my other boot then! Well, the odds are in favour

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of my right leg. Time will hang heavy—I never stayed at home a whole day but once in my life, and that was when I dislocated my shoulder while hunting in Leicestershire.

BOB *re-enters*, L. H.

BOB. Dinner will be on the table at five, sir.

SPLASH. Come here; I wish to speak to you, sirrah!

BOB. (*Aside.*) Now I'm a going to catch it!

SPLASH. As Somerhill says, it is *rather* cold to-day. Come here, sir. How sleek and warm the rascal looks! I don't see any reason why he should be more comfortable than his master. Take off your coat, sir.

BOB. Lord, sir! I feels the whip quite sufficient without that.

SPLASH. You know what you deserve; but this time you shall escape my anger. Off with your coat!

BOB. I've got the *rheumatiz* so cruel bad in this left wing, sir.

SPLASH. Am I to be obeyed?

BOB. Well! (*Aside.*) I don't see no whip in the room. (*Takes off his coat.*) It's uncommon chilly to-day.

SPLASH. Is it? Then I must find a little exercise to warm you. Ha! I have it. (*Pulls forward the table.*) Now, sir, leap over this table.

BOB. It's quite *un*possible, sir: I'm too stiff in the legs. I can run a bit on a fair course; but I never was a good hunter.

SPLASH. Then I must teach you. (*Goes into dressing-room, and brings out a carriage-whip.*) Now, sir—over!

BOB. I'm booked to break my knees.

SPLASH. Over!

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Enter MR. STARTLE, L. H.

START. Over? What's over? I hope I'm in time.

SPLASH. Glad to see you, old boy.

START. Thankee, thankee—Haven't a moment to spare—been detained longer than I expected at—(*Aside*)—No; I wont tell him I've been at the lawyer's—he may suspect. I wish to see you at my house in two hours from this time. You must dine with me to-day.

SPLASH. Can't!

START. You must; or you shall never dine with me again.

SPLASH. Excuse me to-day, and I'll dine with you to-morrow, and every day this week.

START. Now, or never.

SPLASH. You have got some cursed surprise or other in the back ground.

START. Do you wish to marry my daughter?

SPLASH. As soon as possible.

STARTLE. If I don't see you to-day, you haven't the slightest chance. Will you dine with me?

SPLASH. Well, then—if I must, damme if I don't — I know you will be annoyed when I *do* come.

START. It will be the most pleasurable moment of my life —You're late this morning—I see you're not dressed.

SPLASH. (*Aside.*) As much as I shall be to-day. I suppose it's only a family dinner?

START. A quiet, snug thing. (*Aside.*) I'll not tell him there's company; his astonishment will be the greater. I expect you; be punctual.

SPLASH. Suppose the rascally tailor had disappointed me, and I haven't a coat?

START. That's a capital joke! — but you must come,

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if you hadn't a shirt! Splasher, give me your hand;—you are an honest fellow, and I like you. You are a five bottle man, and fit to be the son-in-law of a Duke. Susy shall be yours some day. (*Aside.*) How astonished he'll be by and bye. The Champagne shall flow to-night, my boy—be punctual! Oh! I'm a happy fellow! Fol de rol, lol, lol.

(*Exit, singing,* L. H.)

SPLASH. The Champagne, I think, has been flowing already—the old boy's forgot he hasn't dined. What are you about, huddled up in that corner?

BOB. (L. U. E.) I was only a thinking.

SPLASH. Thinking of what?

BOB. How precious cold it is to be sure.

SPLASH. It's likely to be colder. Now, listen to my orders:—the cab to be ready in two hours—and you to remain as you are. And if you put on a coat or a jacket till the clock has struck six, you must consider yourself no longer in my service.

BOB. Oh! (*Groans.*)

SPLASH. You've both your boots on! Take one off, sir.

BOB. It will give me the gout, sir.

SPLASH. No hesitation—off with the left boot!

BOB. Then the boot on the *near* side is to go *off*, sir—Oh!

(BOB *reluctantly takes off his boot.*)

SPLASH. I can't afford to lose my five hundred for a whim of old Startle's. So go I must—and yet to go without a coat! Give in then! No!—rather than that, I would present myself before the astonished family *in cuerpo.* (*Exit,* C.)

BOB. I'm hanged if I don't think the governor's losing the little sense he has!—First he will go out—then he wont—then he will,—then I'm to remain all day in this airy situation! I'm all of a cold shiver! I've got a segar in my

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pocket—there's a bottle of brandy on the sideboard, and I'm blessed if I don't stick to the kitchen fire. (*Gets the brandy, and drinks.*) What a miserable life I do lead!—But it wont do to kick over the traces till I'm independent. Who would be a Tiger? (*Exit Bob,* L. H.)

SCENE III.

STARTLE'S *Drawing Room. Folding Doors.*

Enter SUSAN *and* CRAPE, R.

SUS. Somerhill not yet returned—the lawyers in the house—visitors arriving—my father declaring I am to be a bride—and I am yet ignorant of the name of the man to whom I am assigned.

CRAPE. Remain no longer in doubt, Miss;—take my word for it, Mr. Splasher is to be the happy man.

SUS. Never, Crape; my father knows me not. My obedience has been mistaken for a want of proper spirit; but he shall find, where my happiness is at stake, I am not the passive creature he takes me for.

CRAPE. Do let me kiss you, Miss;—it does me good to hear a woman stick up for her rights!

SUS. You are a good girl, Crape.

CRAPE. It breaks my heart to think how ill we poor women are used.

Enter STARTLE, L. H.

Well, my darling, your poor, fond parent is filled with joy at the thoughts of your approaching happiness.

CRAPE. Wretchedness, you ought to have said, sir.

START. How dare you speak, Mrs. Pert? She will be

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the happiest woman in England! Have I not done every thing to make her comfortable?—provided a proper husband for her? Not one of your white-faced, taper-waisted, dissipated London dandies, but a noble country gentleman, and as hale and jolly a fellow as any in the three kingdoms.

SUS. (C.) In the absence of Somerhill, I know not how to act.

CRAPE. (*Aside to* SUS.) Why don't you speak, Miss?—Where's your spirit now? I wish we could change places for five minutes, I'd pay him off in his own coin, and astonish him a little.

START. I knew I was right—she is quite overcome with the prospect of her good fortune. (*A loud knock heard at the door,* L. H.) Oh! that's the happy dog!—that's the jovial bridegroom! I know his knock. Now then, girl, prepare for surprise!—prepare to receive your husband,—Mr. Splasher.

(*Enter* SOMERHILL, L. H.)

Mr. Somerhill!—(*sulkily,*)—I'm disappointed! I scarcely thought to have had the pleasure of seeing you till dinner time.

SOMER. Ever anxious in all that concerns the welfare of Miss Susan, I wished to be an early witness of her happiness.

(*Crosses to* C.)

START. I hate intrusion. (*Aside.*) If any thing else crosses me before dinner time, I shall be upset for the day.

SUS. (*Aside, and eagerly.*) What's to be done, Somerhill?

SOMER. (*Aside to her.*) Fear not, dearest! Splasher will not be here—he knows not of the marriage. (*A loud knock.*)

START. Here's Splasher at last!

Enter SERVANT, L. H.

Mr., Mrs., and the Miss Jenkinses.

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START. The whole tribe!—Shew them up. (*Exit* SERVANT, L. H.) Dear me! Splasher's more than half an hour behind his time. I'm getting uncommonly uncomfortable!

(*Enter* MR., MRS., *and the two* MISSES JENKINS, L. H.) (*Introducing them.*) Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Jenkins,—my daughter. Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Jenkins,—Mr. Somerhill.

MR. AND MRS. JENKINS. Delighted to see you. Every happiness attend you!

MISS JENKINS. How handsome you look, dear! What sweet jewels! (*Another knock,* L. H.)

START. Better late than never! I was becoming very uneasy; but now all doubts are at an end.

Enter SERVANT, L. H.

Mr., Master, and Miss Jones.

START. Damn the Joneses! Send them up! (*Exit* SERVANT, L. H.) If Splasher disappoint me, all my well-contrived schemes will be blown into air, and I shall be covered with shame.

(*Enter* MR., MASTER, *and* MISS JONES, L. H.)

Ha! Jones, glad to see you! You know the Jenkins—make yourselves at home.

JONES. How charming the bride looks! (*To* SOMERHILL.) You are about to take possession of an inestimable jewel.

START. You mistake, friend Jones; that is not the bridegroom. Mr. Splasher will be here in a minute—(*Aside*) at least I hope so. (*Another knock,* L. H.) This is he, and all will yet go smoothly.

Enter SERVANT, L. H.

Mr. and Mrs. Tomkins. (*Exit* SERVANT, L. H.)

START. My brain begins to turn!—some dreadful disap-

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pointment awaits me. I ought to have dropped a hint to him that it was his wedding day. Jones, be the master of the ceremonies, and introduce these people to one another.

(*Enter* MR. *and* MRS. TOMKINS, L. H.)

As they come to feast, they may as well set to at once;—while they are filling their mouths, they'll not have time to ask questions. Jones, there's a cold collation in the next room—bring it forward. Now, Jones, see that my friends want nothing. (*The Servants open the folding doors,* C., *and bring forward a table ready set; the visitors retire up.*) My pulse is at 120! (*Takes out his watch.*) Five-and-forty minutes after the time appointed. I'm an unlucky fellow!—a victim to my own contrivances. I shall be laughed at—(*An outcry and loud laughter heard in the street,* L. H.) What noise is that! I'm in such a trepidation, that I shake like an aspen leaf! Some calamity is certainly hanging over me! (*A tremendous knock heard, followed by a loud cheer,* L. H.) What suspense!—Is it good or bad news?

Enter SERVANT, L. H.

Mr. Splasher, sir.

START. I am saved!

SUS. I'm lost!

SOMER. Confusion! this is indeed unexpected.

START. (*To* SERVANT.) How dare you giggle here, sir? What was the meaning of that outcry below?

SERVANT. Why, sir, Mr. Splasher drove up with a mob at his heels;—they all laughed;—then he gave them money;—then they cheer'd!

START. Generous fellow!—Shew him up. (*Exit* SERVANT, L. H.) Now, my friends, you shall see my son-in-law! You may judge what a father I am in providing Susan with

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such a husband. (*Aside.*) How astonished he'll be when I present him with a wife!—What a surprise!

Enter SPLASHER, L. H., *in his shirt sleeves; a boot on his right foot, and a red slipper on his left; several large spots of mud upon his shirt and waistcoat.*

SPLASH. Well, how are you?

START. I'm petrified! (*The rest laugh loudly.*)

SPLASH. I'm rather out of condition!—Ha! Somerhill! didn't expect to meet you here. You see it's all right.

START. Will somebody have the kindness to wake me out of this disagreeable dream?

SPLASH. I will!—(*Cuts at him with his handkerchief.*)—I told you you would be annoyed if I came.

SOMER. But, Mr. Splasher, how was it you robbed the street of so large a portion of its mud?

SPLASH. Upon starting, a wide-mouthed griffin set up a horse laugh! I twisted the whip-cord round him in an instant;—he replied, with a well-directed charge of mud—a mob collected—I cut right and left—cracked the whip—st—st—st—old Prancer understood it, and spanked through them amidst a volley of mud as thick as a hail storm.

START. But old Prancer ought to have understood better than to stop at this house. Mr. Anti-Mania, the mad doctor, lives at the other end of the street.

SPLASH. Come, no sulks, old one! You've often surprised *me*; and now I astonish *you*. Give and take, is fair play all the world over.

START. All my pleasant prospects are at an end.—(*Aside.*) I'm a broken-hearted old gentleman—

(*An uproar is again heard in the street,* L. H.)

What disturbance is that? Not another surprise, I hope!

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JONES. (*Looking through the window*, L. H.) Why, I declare, there are two men a fighting—a little one, and a big one.

SPLASH. An even fifty upon the little one.

JONES. They press upon him—now he fights through them—now he runs over here!

SPLASH. Runs, does he? Then it's *Rockingham* to a donkey against him. (*Voices heard disputing without*, L. H.)

SERVANTS. (*Without.*) You can't come in here.

BOB. (*Without.*) Can't I though? I'll make my way any where.

Enter BOB, L. H., *in his shirt sleeves, and an old shawl thrown over his shoulders—his nose bleeding.*

SPLASH. What the devil do you want?

BOB. Glorious news, Sir! Miss Kitty's *whopp'd* the Bandit!

SPLASH. Bravo!

START. What an Amazon!

BOB. The carrier pigeon, as you ordered, is just arrived at Fantail's with the news.

SPLASH. Twenty guineas for the intelligence, Buckskin! We'll drink Miss Kitty's health in pint bumpers!—(*Fills out wine for himself and* BUCKSKIN.)—Now, Bob—three cheers! huzza!

BOB. Huzza!—huzza!—huzza!

SPLASH. I make free you see, Startle! Can't stop to talk to you now—Company must excuse me—I've another match in view! Pen, ink, and paper, there!—Two thousand guineas to day!—Miss Kitty for ever! (*Exit* R. H.)

START. Another match in view! Miss Kitty for ever! Then he means to decline my daughter!—I'll be revenged for this public insult. How dare you, Sirrah, come into my house without a coat?

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BOB. (L. H.) You must put that question to master—it was his orders. I saddled on this shawl just for decency's sake; but when I got out, how I was *chevied!*—The boys cried out "mad dog!" and when I tripped up one of them, I caught such a rum one over the nose.

SOMER. (R.) Mr. Splasher's conduct looks more like insanity than any thing else.

BOB. Wind me, if I don't think he's cracked in the cocoanut.—(*Points to his head.*)

START. You are right, Mr. Somerhill; such atrocious behaviour must be the effect of delirium.

BOB. It were only this morning I said the same thing; he's been coming such queer pranks lately: he wanted me to jump over the table to-day.

SOMER. Did he not receive a bite from a dog?

BOB. Yes; from Scamp, our terrier. I see it as plain as the distance post—he's got the *Phoby!*

SOMER. It's a clear case of Hydrophobia! (MRS. JENKINS *shrieks, and faints.*)

START. He must be secured at once! I'll send to the doctor's at the end of the street.

BOB. You had better; for when he once breaks out, he lays it in—above a bit.

SOMER. Ladies, pray retire to the dining room—the gentlemen will attend you.

START. Take care of Susan, Mr. Somerhill.—(*Aside.*) What a disagreeable thing it is to be surprised!

SPLASH. (*Without.*) Buckskin!—order post horses—I'm off to-night for *Berkshire.* (START LE *and Visitors run off,* C.)

SOMER. You stay, Buckskin, and watch him. Should he become outrageous, we will be near to assist you. Susan,

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depend on't, before supper time, I shall have your father's consent to wed you. (*Exeunt* SOMERHILL *and* SUSAN, C.)

BOB. A pretty set of cowards they are to run away, and leave me to manage him. That's capital wine!—I'll drink Miss Kitty's health again.—Here he comes—I feel a little nervous.

(*Enter* SPLASHER—*a letter in his hand*—R.)

SPLASH. See this letter is in time for the post.—Whiffler will have it on Thursday, and the thing will be concluded. This is an elegant dinner dress! What must old Startle and his friends take me for?

BOB. (*At the back.*) An unhappy lunatic.

SPLASH. It's very ridiculous!—But when they know all—

BOB. They do!

SPLASH. They'll laugh and enjoy the joke—Ha! ha! ha!

BOB. A pretty joke! There's a set of grinders. How horribly he squints too!

SPLASH. I'm as thirsty as if I had been at a fox-hunt. Bob, give me a tumbler of wine. Let me see—Whiffler is to carry fourteen pounds extra—

BOB. He seems pretty quiet now—I'll try him. If it's the *phoby*, he'll kick at the sight of water.

(SPLASHER *walks about in meditation, while* BOB *fills a glass with water.*)

SPLASH. Where's the wine?

BOB. Here it is.

(BOB *advances with the glass, cautiously, and in great fear.*)

He foams at the mouth already.

SPLASH. What's this? Water! Ugh! You know I detest water, you puppy. (*He throws the water in* BOB's *face.*)

BOB. Help! murder!

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(*Enter two Servants, with a Keeper and Assistant.*)

SERVANT. There he is; secure him.

SPLASH. That's easier said than done.

(SPLASHER *trips up the heels of one, and knocks another down.*)

What, four to one? Then I must try my speed. Forward! Yoicks—Soho! (*Exit* SPLASHER, *followed by Servants.*)

BOB. Secure him, and send for his mother. How very thirsty I am. (*Drinks wine.*) Shall I get my twenty guineas? Is a man's promise, when he's got the *phoby*, worth any thing? Now I'll think of that over a glass of wine. (*Sits at the table, and drinks.*) Who is to pay me for a broken nose? How foolish of the governor to run mad! At this particular moment too, when Kitty's done the trick. (*Drinks.*) What a shocking disorder! I wonder whether they'll smother him between two feather beds? (*Drinks.*) It's lucky he didn't bite me, for he was always very snappish. (*Drinks.*) Well, a man can't die but once; then I wont *whine* any longer—but I'll attack the brandy. (*He drinks from the bottle.*) How very weak I get in the legs; and I can't look straight forward for the life of me. Every thing doubles in the room; the table turns, and doubles. What paper is that? (*Takes the letter from the table.*) Yes, it's a *double* letter. I'm tired of this: I shall go out, and take a *turn*. (*He reels.*) How uneven the floors are in these old houses. My throat's parched; so is the bottle—quite dry. Where's my head gone to? What a dreadful noise there is—Who calls Bob Buckskin? I'm a-coming. (*He reels, and falls upon the ground.*)

SPLASH. (*Without.*) Bob Buckskin!

BOB. Coming!

SPLASH. (*Without.*) Make haste, and assist the poor devil, our master, Bob.

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BOB. Coming!

Enter SPLASHER, C., *with his hands tied behind him, and a white nightcap on his head.*

SPLASH. So I'm seized with hydrophobia! They have left me for a few minutes to compose myself.

BOB. (*Asleep.*) Beware of mad dogs.

SPLASH. That's an unnecessary caution to me. This is some scheme of old Startle's, and be curs'd to him. Bob, I say—(*stumbles over him*)—Upon the floor, drunk, and asleep! (*He kicks him.*) Rise, rascal!

BOB. Who calls me? (*Seeing* SPLASHER.) What a frightful spectacle!

SPLASH. What brought you upon the ground, sir?

BOB. A swimming in the head. I've been subject to fits from the cradle.

SPLASH. Get up, you drunken dog, and slacken these curbs.

BOB. Give me your hand, and help me up.

(*Laughter, and noise of merriment.*)

SPLASH. They're enjoying themselves below—making merry at my expense; but I'll be even with them. (*A clock strikes six.*) Six o'clock—Huzza! Somerhill's five hundred pounds are gone! Huzza! Shout, you scoundrel!

BOB. I sha'n't shout! When you was in your senses you'd never let me rest. Now you're mad, you ought to be quiet.

SPLASH. Mad!—If my arms were free—Remember, sir, I owe you something.

BOB. You do—twenty guineas, and half-a-year's wages; and as I don't choose to serve a man with the *Phoby*, you'll please to stick three months' notice in the bill.

(*The Band below strikes up a Quadrille.*)

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SPLASH. Oh! if dancing is the order of the day, here goes—
(SPLASHER *starts off to the Music*—BOB *endeavours to follow him; while they are dancing*—

Enter SOMERHILL, STARTLE, FUSILE, SUSAN, *Visiters, and Servants with candles,* C.

SPLASH. Somerhill, I've won your five hundred.

SOMER. Dearly won it, and you shall have it.

SPLASH. Thankee—thankee. You're a man of honour—give me your hand.—I can't take it just yet!

SOMER. Give Mr. Splasher his liberty.

(*To the Keeper, who releases* SPLASHER.)

SPLASH. Now I'll be even with old Startle. (*Starts.*) Ha! who is that little wretched old man with an elephant on his head?—Remove the mountain. (*He knocks off* START.'S *wig.*)

START. Pinion his arms again.

SPLASH. Look at the moon;—what does she say?—listen! —All the world's insane; and each man thinks his neighbour madder than himself. Why not trip up old Atlas by the heels, and send the globe spinning? (*He trips up* STARTLE.) How are you? My name is Whirligig. Give me a bowl of lighted sulphur.

BOB. (*Upon the floor.*) Give me a glass of Soda Water.

START. What an escape you've had, Susan. By this time, you would have been his wife! Mr. Somerhill, she shall be yours to-morrow morning; and I'll never attempt to surprise any one again.

SOMER. I know not how to thank you! Mr. Splasher's case, I fear, is hopeless. The money I have lost to him I'll pay over to a trustee.

SPLASH. No you wont, while I'm alive to receive it. I am

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as sane, though not quite so deep as you. (SOMERHILL *gives him notes.*) I see through it. I've been cleverly had—a sprat to catch a whale. I ought to call you out, Mr. Somerhill.

FUS. Shall I make arrangements?

SPLASH. I'll not trouble you, Captain. A letter's off to Dick Whiffler, accepting his challenge to ride a match for a thousand. Now, as it is P. P., I should not like to run the risk of paying forfeit. You've all done the knowing one. (*They laugh.*) Well, forget and forgive—that's the best way. But I have certainly been very ill used. I appeal to you—(*To the Audience.*)—May I not hope for better treatment here?—Your hands decide it—I ask a laugh for the Man, and a roar for the Tiger.

THE END.

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